

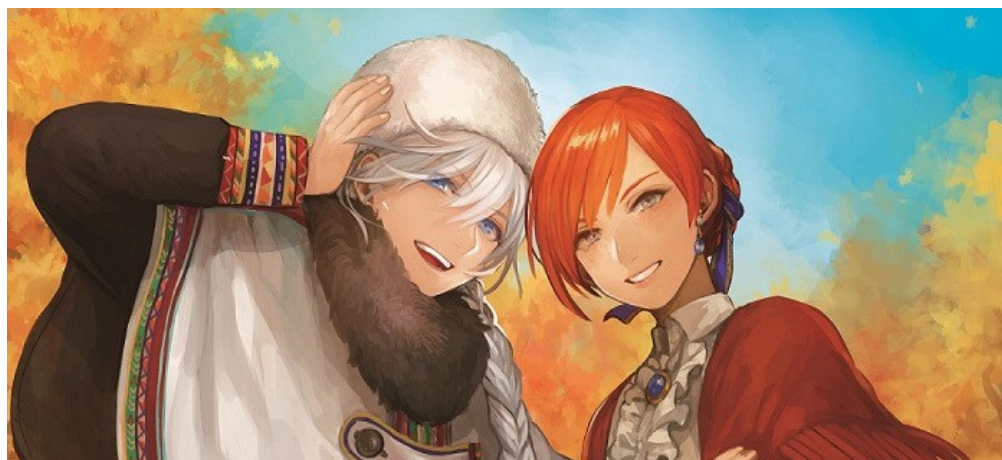
The Snow Country Hunting Life of the Northern Nobleman and the Raptor Wife 北欧貴族と猛禽妻の雪国狩 り暮らし

Additional Chapters

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PDF by swhp

Chapter 87 - The Nine Brothers' Sieglinde Observation Diary

Okt¹. 03 Albert

When we received the news that Sieg was coming back, our family was grief-stricken.

—— In the end, our little sister was being returned.

When the news arrived, father went to the ranch while looking like an animal that was getting sold off to the market.

Mother enthusiastically said that she would turn her into a lady this time, and ordered dresses. She felt that Sieglinde would have grown large in the remote land so she ordered larger sizes. No one could retort that it was too late.

A while later, I wrote a letter warning my son Claus, who was to come home on vacation from the boarding school, to not fool around with her.

Even so, what should I say to my little sister.

The mansion was surrounded in a sorrowful atmosphere.

Nov. 01 Daniel

Sieglinde is finally back.

I wanted to work without rest while my little sister and her husband was home, but my older brother said, "It's scary so please stay with me!" so I grudgingly attended the ritual where Sieglinde was being returned from her husband.

1 The author uses abbreviations of the German words for the months.

We also held a meeting to discuss who should go out to greet who would be acting violently because she is getting returned.

All of us brothers shook our heads.

The discussion went on until dawn.

The result — First, let's at least feed her some meat.

That was the conclusion we came to after we seriously discussed the matter.

We decided to pool our money and buy a cow from father's ranch.

—— Sieglinde. Do not worry. You may have been abandoned by your husband, but you have meat!!

One cow will soothe our little sister's heart.

Also, we practiced making a soft expression to receive Sieg who would be heartbroken.

Nov. 12 Diederich.

In the end, the day when Sieg comes visited us.

I couldn't tell my young daughters that their aunt was coming back.

Both Edelgard and Adeltraud followed Sieg well, but I could not bear seeing them in shock from their aunt's changed appearance.

All that we could do now was to pray to God.

—— O God, please calm down the unruly Sieg.

In the morning, everyone had a strained expression.

The sensitive Edelgard seemed to have felt the tension in the air, as she was not eating much.

Adeltraud, who is dense in a good sense of the word, was appetisingly spreading jam and bread and was biting into it.

Everyone tried their best to endure their day, using the innocent Adeltraud as a refresher.

Nov. 12 Eugen

We received news that Sieg had arrived from a servant.

Is she alone!? I thought, but it seemed that the husband was here as well.

I felt relieved that there would not be a fight when people were going to explain the circumstances.

I asked older brother what kind of person Sieg's husband is, but he replied that only father and mother met him and that he did not know.

Father said that Sieg's husband is a very kind and fluffy young man.

When I asked if he has a calm personality, he replied no.

Fluffy seems to refer to his appearance. I'm not sure what that means.

Just who is her husband who is also a count in another country.

Furthermore, apparently it was he who proposed to Sieg because he fell in love with her at first sight.

Just what part of Sieg, who always has a sharp gaze, did he like. It's full of mysteries.

The door opened with great force, causing all of us brothers to flinch.

I thought that it might have been Sieglinde who was acting wildly, but it was eldest brother's son Claus.

Claus apparently came to see Sieglinde.

He asked that we should go to the drawing room, but none of us were ready so we shook our heads violently.

In the end, Claus was to go to the drawing room alone. Eldest brother repeatedly warned him to not do anything unnecessary, but that kid probably would not listen.

I saw off the reckless Claus with a wailful feeling.

Nov. 12 Florenz

Claus, who went out energetically, came back with a face as if he saw something terrifying.

—— That's why we warned you.

Everyone in the room thought that.

Claus told us to go to the drawing room since it was almost meal time.

Ultimately, the time has come. Eldest brother murmured a heavy sentence.

The meal will be had without children.

The opponent was Sieglinde who was in her most touchy state. It's no surprise that people below the age of 18 would be refused.

Before we went to the drawing room, we fidgeted over who should be in the lead.

We drew lots with numbers up to 4, and then walked in a straight line in that order.

The lead was eldest brother Albert who drew the lot with the number 1.

When we finally arrived at the room, he blurted out, “Sieglinde!?” in a tone of surprise.

To see our little sister who has turned into a burly warrior in the foreign land, us brothers peeked into the room.

——Nnn??

The lady sitting on the chair is Sieglinde!?

With longer hair and a plumper body, Sieg looked like a different person.

She looked, miraculously, good in the dress.

In addition, we realised that we were greatly mistaken.

Sieg was just visiting on vacation.

Everyone in the family greeted Sieg and her husband awkwardly.

From seeing my little sister, I could tell. She was cherished in the foreign land.

Sieg’s husband Ritzhard whom I saw for the time had a fluffy impression like snow as father and mother said.

He was sociable, talking to us with smiles.

As I watched him, I came to an understanding.

If it was someone as sociable as him, befriending Sieg would have been fast after all.

Father gathered us for a meal.

On the table, there were many meat dishes.

They were all things that Sieg likes.

However, Sieg did not eat well.

In the middle, when the main course came out, she covered her mouth and ran out of the room.

The whole family became puzzled over what might have happened.

Ritzhard quickly said, "Morning sickness."

Believe it or not, Sieg was pregnant.

It's great that the couple is on good terms.

Nov.15 Georg

My older brother who was back home for holiday informed me that I would be able to see something interesting, so I decided to visit the family home.

When I asked what the interesting thing was, older brother did not answer.

Since I was told that I would be able to know if I went to the drawing room, I headed there.

When I opened the door and entered, there was a red-haired lady that I saw for the first time.

A relative? Or so I thought, but that person said that it has been a while in a friendly tone.

While I was tilting my head from hearing that we met before, I discovered an unbelievable fact.

The lady in front of me was Sieglinde.

To be frank, I was surprised.

She changed so much, in so many ways.

To become so feminine, just what happened overseas.

I did think that she was being cherished by her husband, but to become like this.

Moreover, I never saw her wearing accessories before, but there was jewelry shining at her ear.

Apparently it was a present from her husband.

When I honestly told her that it suits her well, she smiled shyly.

I wanted to greet her husband who changed her, but he was returning home then.

When I joked, “Could he be abandoning you?” she glared at me with a terrifying expression, the like of which I never saw before.

—— O husband, please come quickly and take Sieg away.

I hoped so as beads of sweat formed on my brows.

Dez. 13 Heino

From some time ago, I received news that Sieg was back at our parents’ home.

Letters of misfortune informing my brothers' agonies arrived once a week.

Believe it or not, it was discovered that Sieg was pregnant so she was to recuperate. Meanwhile, her husband was back in his country temporarily.

It was written that they were being at the mercy of Sieg's emotional instability, but I could tell that it was because my older brothers joked about or said something unnecessary.

To anger Sieg, I thought that my brothers were being funny.

There were not many things I could do.

While thinking of our parents' place, I clasped my hands.

—— Ritzhard-dono, please return quickly and calm down the rampaging Sieglinde.

A few days later, I received news that Ritzhard-dono came back.

It seemed that peace finally returned there.

Dez. 21 Ewald

I was so very surprised at Sieglinde's change.

I could not imagine my little sister being someone's docile wife, but Sieg who was in front of me felt like a reserved wife.

I could only be surprised at Ritzhard-san's ability.

Jan. 15 Johann

When I visited my parents' place after a long time, there was a woman crouching in the garden so I tilted my head.

Who could this be.

She wore a hat decorated with flowers and ribbons, and was removing the snow on the flowerbed with clothes that looked to be a little thin for winter.

The skin was flawless and blended into the snowy landscape.

I was somewhat bothered so I talked to her.

“Young lady, you will catch a cold in those clothes,” said I as I offered her a coat.

The person that was crouching down looked up and made an elegant smile.

And then, a reply of “I’m alright!” came back.

I was surprised by that.

Because the voice was that of a man’s.

The person with the appearance of a fairy was Sieglinde’s husband.

As to why he was wearing a lady’s hat, it was something mother bought for Sieg but because she did not want to use it, mother asked him to try it.

—— Erm, you can refuse those things.

I told my innocent younger brother-in-law.



Within a year, Sieg changed surprisingly.

We recalled father saying that all women had potential to bloom like a flower.

This time, we could not help but nod to those words.

Chapter 88 - Aina and Emmerich's Elopement of Love!?

I was out of the village and was heading for Emmerich's country.

After running away from the village, I finally came to my senses after we boarded the ship.

The cabin room has a bunk bed and there was also a curtain to separate the room.

I could have my private space, but it did not change the fact that the two of us were sharing one room.

With a carefree attitude, Emmerich asked me if I preferred the top bed or the bottom bed.

"Such a thing, anything is fine."

"Ah, okay, then, Aina-chan gets the top bed."

"....."

What is this. This, the way how he's suggesting that the top bed is better.

When I asked about it, he told me that he was always the one on the top bed when he sharing bunk beds with his brothers.

"Shall we go eat?"

"Eh!?"

"There's a dining hall above."

"....."

I did not have much appetite from the morning so I did not have anything.

I felt hunger now.

While appreciating Emmerich's offer, I followed him.

The dining hall where we could have foreign food was crowded with people.

“.....”

Even if I saw the menu, I couldn't read it well. I can't read Emmerich's language very well. My grandparents were against me learning other languages.

Ritz-oniichan sometimes taught me in secret, but I'm still not used to the language.

As for our conversations, half of the words are in my language and half of the words are in his language.

He studied hard for me.

However, I wanted to learn Emmerich's country's language so I asked him to speak more in his language.

Just being able to read the words didn't help with identifying the dishes.

I felt as though there were glances directed here, so I wanted to return to the room quickly. Therefore, I left it to Emmerich.

“Aina-chan, what would you like?”

“.....Anything's fine.”

I regretted saying that afterwards. Why did I say such an uncute thing.

It would be nice to be able to smile and ask which is good like Ritz-oniichan would have done.

“Let's see, what would be good.”

“.....”

After hearing Emmerich's response, I could raise my head.

Good. He didn't look displeased at my attitude.

I repetitively apologised in my head.

"There are dishes that have a strong flavour, so~"

Emmerich started explaining the dishes on the menu.

"The bread probably won't be too different from the ones we had in the village. As for the soup....."

I told him that anything was fine, but he explained everything for me.

I ordered potato soup called 'Kartoffelsuppe' and a fried veal sirloin dish called 'Schnitzel'.

Emmerich ordered onion soup called 'Zwiebelsuppe' and a dish of chicken cooked with red wine, called 'coq au vin'.²

The ordered dishes were served quickly. In the centre of the table, a basket with bread was placed.

'Kartoffelsuppe' was a thoroughly stewed soup made from mashed potatoes, milk from livestock, and spices, I suppose? It had deep flavour, and the sensation on the tongue was soft. Dipping bread in it was delicious as well.

'Schnitzel' was a dish that was cooked by deep frying beef sirloin covered in dried bread crusts.

He told me that I should sprinkle lemon juice over and that I should have it with steamed potatoes.

² The German names are the literal meanings (potato soup and onion soup respectively). Schnitzel I think most people know. Coq au vin is a french dish made by braising chicken with wine.

When I brought the knife to the meat, it cut through very well. It was a very soft meat.

The surface was crispy while the meat juice overflowed inside. Because of the lemon juice, the taste was clean as well.

Foreign food was surprisingly good.

On our way back, Emmerich told me that he's going to the store.

"If there's anything you need, please tell me."

"....."

Emmerich paid for the meal. I thought of paying for myself, but I had left my wallet in the room.

"Aina-chan, would you like some chocolate?"

"No need."

"Sweets?"

"I told you there's no need."

".....Alright."

I did it again.

Why do I keep saying such uncute things.

As I watched Emmerich's back going further away, I felt like running away.

I want to be more sociable like Ritz-oniichan.

The things I suddenly say are all harsh things.

"Shall we go."

“.....”

I followed Emmerich back to the room as he held a paper bag.



When I entered the room, Emmerich served juice and snacks.

“Eh, this, why!?”

“Let’s eat together after a while.”

“.....O-Okay.”

Emmerich just smiled and said that he wanted to have some.

After that, the rest of the time was used to study the language.

If there were things I did not know, Emmerich taught me.

The two days boat trip flew by quickly.

At the port, we bought breakfast at the market.

While eating, we discussed what we should do afterwards.

Emmerich’s place is located in the capital of this country.

Since it would be conspicuous to wear traditional clothes, he bought a one-piece dress and a coat for me.

Thanks to the goodwill of the clerk, I was able to change in the inside of the store.

The dress had frills with flower patterns on the hem and the cuffs. The skirt was light, unlike the traditional clothes of the village. There were many ribbons near the chest and the hips so it was cute. The coat was fluffy, made of wool. Compared to my homeland, it was not very cold here but Emmerich told me that I might catch a cold so I bought it.

I was planning on paying for the clothes, but Emmerich paid for me. I felt bad.

“I’ll also do your hair in a cute style.”

“Eh?”

“Twintail braids are drab, you see?”

“.....”

The braids are signify my belief in the spirit that protects the village.

She’s a kindly clerk. I could refuse.

However, this place is not my homeland.

“.....Yes, please.”

“Leave it to me!”

I never tried other hairstyles than braiding. My heart fluttered a bit.

My hair was split into two halves then weaved. Braiding hair was the same, but having hair that was not let down was fresh.

I thought it was over, but it wasn’t so.

The bottom of the braids were lifted to give them volume and something was stuck through my hair to hold them in place.

“Okay, done.”

“!”

——Amazing! Feels sort of adult-like!

I checked myself out in a long mirror that reflected all of myself.

I couldn't believe it. I looked like someone completely different.

“Now now, stop fidgeting, we have to show your husband as well.”

“!?”

I tried to say that he was not my husband, but she kept pushing my back.

I wanted to complain, but unfortunately I did not know the words in the foreign language.

In the end, I was pushed out to the store floor with a thud.

“Ah!”

I had shoes with heels, which I was not used to, so I lost balance.

I'm falling! The moment I thought that, Emmerich ran over and caught me.

“A-Are you alright?”

“.....Fine.”

Not 'fine'!

Why couldn't say the short sentence, “Vielendank (Thank you very much)”

“.....?”

Even after a long time passed, Emmerich did not remove his hands from my shoulders, so I cautiously raised my head.

“!”

When our eyes met, Emmerich blinked unnaturally.

“Erm, are you alright?”

.....Rather, are you angry?

When I was about to ask that, he spoke up first.

“Aina-chan, you look so pretty.”

“Eh?”

“It suits you well.”

“!”

Apparently, Emmerich was acting strangely because he was fascinated by me.

When I found that out, I got embarrassed so I distanced myself.

“Quickly, let’s go.”

“.....Yes.”

I bowed to the kind clerk and then we exited the store.

There was a carriage headed for the capital, so we rode that. After many hours, we finally arrived at the town Emmerich lived in.

“It might be a little cramped here.”

“.....Okay.”

He lived in a rented room in a house three stories high.

It consisted of a living room, a bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, a toilet, perfect for living alone.

“Aina-chan, you can use the bedroom.”

“What about you?”

“I’m fine with the living room sofa.”

“.....”

Even if I said that I would be fine with the sofa, I thought that he wouldn’t listen so I accepted his goodwill.

I found out as we travelled together that Emmerich is quite stubborn.

Also, he never gives up his attitude of placing ladies first.

“From here on, work will get busy so I can’t come back too much.”

“.....Okay.”

“Should we hire a maid?”

“No need.”

“B-But.”

“I can do it alone.”

I have confidence in cleaning and cooking and sewing.

If we hire people, it would burden Emmerich’s budget, and the thought of having someone else in the house made me feel uneasy so I declined.

“Then, if there is anything troubling you ask for help from the owner on the first floor. I will request for assistance to Aina-chan.”

“.....Alright.”

Like so, my life together with Emmerich began.



As he said on the first day of living together, Emmerich did not come home for most of the time.

Meanwhile, I went outside to shop around or take strolls in the park, trying to go out of the house as much as possible.

However, there was one scary incident.

On the way back from the market, a young man talked to me.

He spoke quickly in the foreign language so I could not understand.

“It’s alright so hang out with me!” was all I could get.

Scary.

He was not taller than Emmerich, but he had an intimidating aura.

I shook my head to convey that I didn't want to. However, he grabbed my arm so I swung the basket I had on one hand to his shoulder.

He was taken aback and let me go.

I concentrated solely on running.

However, he was also chasing after me persistently. I could hear a terrifying roar behind me.

I thought that I was on the quick side, but I could not run well because of the shoes.

Tears came flowing out from the fear.

I was almost home, but then I remembered that I had put the key in the basket, which made even more tears flow out.

I did not have time to fetch the basket that hit the man.

I soon arrived at my home.

I wonder if the house owner is home.

Please, help, I prayed as I ran.

“——!”

From the sight I was greeted by, I suspected my eyes.

Emmerich was coincidentally in front of the door.

“Eh? Aina-chan.”

I flew into his arms and tightly hugged him.

“Eh, what’s wrong——!”

The man who was chasing me faced Emmerich.

“What, she already had someone.”

“Who are you?”

They were talking about something, but Emmerich spoke quickly as well so I couldn’t get what they were saying.

“That woman, she swung her basket at me. I have something to say to her so lend her to me.”

“I can’t do that.”

“Hoh?”

——Scary.

Have I done something irreparable without realising it?

Emmerich softly patted my shoulders that were shaking.

“Well, what’s going on here?”

The house owner who happened to hear the commotion came outside.

Emmerich asked the house owner to take me inside.

When I explained the situation, I was told that I did nothing bad.

“It’s alright. David-san will take care of it.”

Even so, I was worried about Emmerich.

What if he gets injured, I thought. The shaking in my shoulders did not go away.

Maybe because my thoughts showed on my face, the house owner elaborated.

“He’s a soldier. He’s used to fights.”

“!”

As the house owner said, Emmerich came back with a nonchalant look.

“Sorry for causing a commotion outside the house.”

“No, it’s alright. However, the public order around the area has worsened due to increased immigration. I wouldn’t recommend letting a young woman walking around alone.”

“Yes. Indeed.”

I was the one who did a bad thing, yet Emmerich was scolded by the house owner.

I heard about the public order worsening from the day I arrived here. I was also told to shop from the door-to-door merchants.

I returned home with my back drooping.

Today, I heard that Emmerich would be coming back so I was planning to cook some delicious food for him, but I ended up dropping the ingredients.

I really should apologise this time.

I breathed in while thinking that, but Emmerich spoke up first.

“Aina-chan, I’m glad you’re safe.”

“!”

Emmerich held my hand and crouched down.

And then he started murmuring that he was sorry.

“W-Why? The one at fault here is me who went out arbitrarily.”

Emmerich softly said that it was not so, and fell into silence.

“——Ah.”

While I was looking at the top of Emmerich’s head, I remembered something.

“Eh, what is it?”

“The house key, I left it on the street with the basket! I have to go fetch them!”

When I said that, Emmerich said that he’ll go.

“B-But.”

“It’s alright, so wait at home.”

“.....”

He doesn’t listen to others when he’s like this, so I decided to leave it to him.

While Emmerich is outside, I started preparing the meal.

Even though I said that, there were only root vegetables such as potatoes, some bread, smoked meat and canned food.

In the kitchen, I categorised the potatoes.

In this country, there are three major categories of potatoes.

First, there's 'Festkochende Kartoffeln', potatoes which do not collapse easily.

These are used for boiling or frying.

Second, there's 'Vorwiegend Festkochende Kartoffeln', potatoes which are hard to cook while still maintaining their structure. These are used when one wants moderate texture.

Finally, there's 'Mehligkochende Kartoffeln', potatoes that collapse easily. These are used for soup.³

When I first visited the market, I was surprised by the great variety of potatoes.

I used the easily collapsing potatoes to make soup. I added smoked meat, potatoes and some spices then I started boiling it slowly.

I baked the potatoes that do not easily collapse in the stove.

Meanwhile, I made white sauce.

Milk and flour are mixed, then seasoned with spices. I made a little too much. Finally, I mixed it with minced smoke meat and mushrooms marinated in oil.

On the cross-shaped slits on the potatoes, I poured white sauce and powdered cheese, and then heated them again. It's done once cheese has completely melted.

The soup that was left on the fire after putting in the ingredients seemed to be done as well.

³ Anyone proficient in German? Please check these terms if possible. Edit: A big thanks to 'Anonymous Coward' for taking the time and effort to check!

At that moment, Emmerich returned.

“Aina-chan, the key and basket with the shopped goods were there.”

“!”

The kind clerk at the tailor shop had picked it up.

I was relieved since we found the key.

“Th-Thank you.”

“Nn. It was nice that it was there.”

Emmerich went back to the usual silly smile.

When I told him that the meal was ready, he looked happy.

It was only a simple meal made from what I had home, but Emmerich still ate them deliciously.



The life in the foreign country was just beginning, but every day was fulfilling.

I also thought that it would be nice if I could have a honest attitude to Emmerich as well.

Aina and Emmerich’s Elopement of Love!? — The End.

Chapter 89 - The Dog and Father

Sieglinde left one dog as a gift and returned to the country where she married off to.

I thought that my daughters would feel sad, but my expectations were far off.

Edelgard and Adeltraud looked lonesome for a bit, but surprisingly they are now preoccupied with the dog.

The problem was elsewhere.

There was a person disappointed not over Sieg but over her husband Ritzhard-kun.

Father.

He went out to the ranch with a depressed expression again.

To make father this sad, just what could he have done..... I am only joking. The young man who manages being Sieglinde's husband in a carefree manner is a very sociable man.

He was staying here as a guest, but he helped with father's work, handled Sieg's emotions very well, and flawlessly dealt with mother and sister-in-law. I could only see him as a superman.

Just why is he being Sieg's husband?

Or so I wondered, but when I heard that most women cannot survive in the harsh environment of Ritzhard-kun's land I understood.

Apparently, it is a land where the snow rages on, where savage beasts roam the forests. A frightening place.

When I heard that, I felt that it was the perfect place for my rough little sister Sieglinde.

They are on quite good terms as a couple, that I was in disbelief that such miracles did exist.

I could only pray that they would be happy for a long time.

Rather, the bigger problem is father.

He was even more depressed than my two daughters.

What is a proper adult doing, I thought, but it was Ritzhard who seized the heart of the impregnable fortress Sieg. Father too must have liked him very much, treating him like his own son.

Well, I also think that us brothers are also responsible for this.

We were busy at work, so we prioritised resting our bodies over helping father out with work.

Originally, it's something that we needed to do, but Ritzhard went there.

I will reflect on myself and help with father's ranch! It was easy to pledge so to myself, but seeing work piling up I couldn't help him.

My brothers are all soldiers as well, so our busy periods overlapped.

However, we cannot leave our father depressed like this.

While I was agonising over what I should do in the drawing room, I spotted my daughters carrying the dog in a basket.

A fluffy, snow-white dog.

The name is 'Ritz'.

Adeltraud named it.

But to coolly let someone name a dog after him, I was in awe. He is probably the most magnanimous man in our family.

The dog breed is a samoyed, that grows to a very large size.

It is kind and likes to play, so I heard from Sigelinde that these dogs are popular as pets.

It has a warm personality and does not have much hunting instincts, and it is friendly to people so it is not fit as a guard dog.

Everyone in the family agrees that its smile is similar to Ritzhard-kun.

My wife murmured, we have to get the dog trained.

Indeed, it is a very big dog, so if it lunges at my daughters while playing around it will be very dangerous.

I wondered if I knew anyone who knew a lot about dogs.

“Ah!”

“Goodness, what is it!?”

I was sorry to have surprised my wife, but I had a great idea.

I thought of leaving the education of the dog to father.

I heard that father also trained the sheepdogs.

If so, we can leave the dog to father.

Fortunately, the dog is very similar to Ritzhard-kun. The name is the same as well. Maybe it might be able to soothe father's heart as well.

As soon as possible, I asked father that day.

But then I thought that my daughters would be saddened if the dog was left to father. I had thought that they might not want to hand over their cute dog, but Edelgard and Adeltraud honestly handed over the dog.

I felt sorry, but then I heard that my daughters energetically went out on strolls to the forest so I felt relieved.

I held the dog and went to father's office.

"Father, may I have some time?"

A reply came immediately.

I was sitting face-to-face with father who was still looking exhausted.

Seeing the dog in my arms, he asked what it was that I wanted.

"I want father to train this dog."

"I am to train the dog?"

"Yes. Can I ask you for that?"

I handed the dog over to father who was listening with a vacant expression.

Father made a confused expression at the dog he was suddenly given.

The fluffy dog did not shy away and stayed still.

To be similar to Ritzhard-kun even with this. What a frightening dog, I thought.

The dog Ritz stared up at father.

Getting stared at, father gently patted the dog Ritz's head.

The dog's fur is soft, causing one to caress it a lot.

Gradually, father's cheeks loosened.

After feeling the fur to his heart's content, father expressed his impressions.

"Th-This is quite cute."

"Right."

The dog Ritz seized father's heart.

I told the dog Ritz that I am leaving father to it with my gaze, and then left the room.

A few days later.

When I was coming back home from training, I saw father working energetically with the dog Ritz following behind him.

When I talked to him, I confirmed that it was the usual father I knew.

When I asked how the dog was doing, father laughed that it was troubling because it has too much energy.

The strategy 'soothe father with the dog Ritz-kun' seemed to have worked.

After seeing my father like that, I made up my mind.

First, I requested to be moved to a branch with less work.

I had more leisure in life, and I had more time I could spend with my wife and my daughters.

At that moment, us brothers reflected on our past actions and actively helped out with father.

Until now, we have only been doing work in the military, so we were not used to working with animals. At first, we went through great ordeals, but we gradually found it pleasurable and worthwhile.

Some months later, the dog Ritz grew into a fine dog.

When accompanying my daughters into the forests, it strode forth with an expression like a knight's, exercising vigilance against wild animals.

It was a lovely dog that never lost its smile, so it healed all the family and the servants.

When accompanying father to the ranch, it also properly carried out its job as a working dog.

As expected of a dog Sieglinde chose, I thought in awe.

Thanks to the dog Ritz, the house became much brighter.

I felt sincerely thankful for the new family member.

A few years later, we went to Ritzhard-kun's country with father, my daughters and the dog Ritz. It was dangerous when there was a pair of lookalikes.

One is a social white dog, and the other is a social white-haired young man.

They were both not familiar with each other, but Ritzhard-kun said "Long time no see" as if he was greeting an old friend, and the dog Ritz wagged its tail as if it found someone that was nice, after which they ran up to each other.

Seeing the two hug each other, I almost laughed because their actions and their appearances were too similar.

I desperately bit my lower lip and held it in.

There were many delightful events in Ritzhard-kun's village, but that is a story for another time.

Chapter 90 - Emmerich and the Fickle Kittens — First Part

It has been a few months since I started living with Aina in my homeland.

Because I was retiring from the military soon, I was burdened with work, so I could not make enough time to spend with her.

It is the long-awaited life with her, but there is no trace of sweetness.

Rather, Aina-chan's behaviour is salty.

In the morning, she glares at me warily while making breakfast.

Before I realise it, the lunchbox is placed inside my bag. I always am at awe that it's like magic.

Because I come back late at night, she is always sleeping before me. However, there are many dishes on the table.

I'm happy from just that. Aina-chan is doing her best for me.

I asked her if there was anything bothering her or if there was anything she was holding in, but all she would say is, "Not really."

I have no clue on what women need so I am leaving that to the landlady.

The usual morning.

I hurriedly woke up just in time and start dressing up.

Since there is a woman, I have to be careful, but maybe because I am tired every day, my body does not listen to me.

I brushed my teeth, shaved my beard and combed my hair before putting on the military uniform Aina-chan cleaned.

When I go to the dining room, Aina-chan is making breakfast.

Why is such a frail and diligent snow fairy in this house? I immediately felt happy.

"A-Aina-chan, morning!"

When I offered a greeting, Aina-chan quickly looked back and glared at me with an expression as if she was looking at her parents' killer. Of course, she did not reply back.

When I sat down and waited, she left a cup of coffee with a loud bang.

“Thank you.”

Even though I thanked her, I was ignored. Her tightly shut lips did not open. It was the usual.

I did not mind her attitude. Ritz-kun said in his letter that she is the shyest girl in the village. Furthermore, I already understand Aina-chan through exchanging letters.

She always worried for my health. She said that my mundane stories were fun. She always sent polite words.

Moreover, the food she cooks every day has deep love in it.

Therefore, I believe that her harsh attitude comes from either embarrassment or shyness.

.....Probably.

As I was reading the newspaper while drinking coffee, she served breakfast on the table.

Aina set the table with waste-free movements.

She sliced freshly baked bread and spread jam on it. It was so delicious. When I asked where she got it from, she told me that she made it.

She spread plenty of butter of on another slice.

Other than that, there were white sausages, potato soup, and boiled and peeled eggs.

They were all delicious.

Even as I ate, Aina-chan worked diligently.

When I invited her to eat with me before, she sternly refused with a “No!” so I did not invite her after that.

I thanked Aina-chan for the delicious meal.

“Aina-chan, thank you. They were all delicious.”

“.....Why don't you go to work quickly?”

“Ah, yes.”

We repeated the same conversation every morning.

When I went to work, I was held up by a colleague I was seeing after a long time.

Apparently, the cat he has been raising at his home had babies so he was having trouble.

“No, my house, is shared.....”

“You won't get caught if you keep quiet!”

“I will get caught.”

Moreover, I don't want to betray the kind landlady.

To begin with, I prefer dogs.

I'm actually feeling a little melancholy because I had not met the dog at my family's place for some time.

My parents' place is nearby, but because of the busy schedule I couldn't really contact them.

“That’s how it is, so,”

“Wait a bit!”

Even though I declined, my colleague persisted tenaciously.

“Aren’t you lonely alone?”

“.....”

I never told anyone that I am living with Aina-chan. If I did, they would pester me to introduce her.

I wanted to boast my cute Aina-chan, but it would be troublesome if some guys fell in love with her, so I did not introduce her.

I also ate her lunches filled with love in secret. I was without flaw regarding that.

I was like this from a long time ago.

I never showed what was important to me anyone else, just keeping it to myself.

I felt that childhood habits do carry over to adulthood.

“Hey, it’s just fine with looking, so come over tomorrow.”

“N-No, tomorrow is a holiday in a long time, so,”

I was trying to say that it wasn’t possible, but my colleague had already left.

I was planning on going out with Aina-chan on my next holiday though.

Although I didn’t tell the person in question.

The next day.

To prepare for going to my colleague's house, I dressed myself up.

After breakfast, I informed Aina-chan that I am going out.

"I'll be going to colleague's house today."

"!"

From the sudden schedule, Aina-chan looked surprised.

I wonder if she wanted to go out somewhere with me.

When she went out alone before, she was harassed by a ruffian so I told her to not go out alone. I asked the landlady to go out with her.

If it's now, at this timing, it might be easy to ask her out.

Fortunately, my colleague is married. He is also a devoted husband, so he won't be attracted to Aina-chan.

I mustered up my courage and asked.

"Aina-chan, would you like to come as well?"

"!"

Aina-chan made a surprised expression again.

I told her that we should try ice cream on the way back from seeing the cats. She stayed expressionless for a while, but soon she nodded in response.

I waited until Aina-chan finished preparing.

The clock was ticking past the appointed time, but the guy is waiting in his home so there won't be any problems.

A few dozen minutes later, Aina-chan came out of the room.

“O-Ohh!”

Seeing her in her street wear, I let out a sound of awe.

Her somewhat wavy silver-white hair was tied up high, and she had light makeup on. The lips with the pink shade were unbearable.

She had a white blouse adorned with laces along with a sky-blue dress. It's something I never saw before, maybe she bought it with the landlady?

Whatever it was, I felt that she was extremely lovely.

“.....Stop staring.”

“Ah, sorry.”

Usually, she would glare at me but today she turned her face elsewhere.

Is she embarrassed? I thought, but I refrained from questioning because that would be pushing my luck.

The exquisite white bag she has in her hand is from Ritz and Sieglinde.

The two of them are currently staying in Thüringen. Apparently, Sieg is pregnant so they will be giving birth here. It's a wonderful news.

I wondered if I should buy celebratory goods on the way back, but then I realised that I never heard of gifts for pregnancy.

Well, a gift for their hospitality might be good too, I thought as I walked to my colleague's house with Aina-chan.

When we arrived at my colleague's house, his wife and a four-year-old child greeted us. After that, my colleague and the cat.

He was surprised to see Aina-chan, but when I introduced her as my wife he warmly received her.

The sweets gift we bought on the way was also gladly received.

Aina-chan was guided by my colleague's daughter to see the kitten. The wife also followed them.

When I became alone in the room with my colleague, it turned into an interrogation on how I came to find such a beautiful woman.

A few dozen minutes later. When Aina-chan came back, she had a kitten in her arms.

She looked at me with upturned eyes as if she was pleading something.

What was in her arms was a red kitten with large and round eyes.

Maybe because it just had milk from its mother, its stomach was chubby.

I know what Aina-chan wants to say to me.

However, we live in an apartment so we can't raise cats.

If we want to, we would need a detached house.

Detached houses have high rents.

In preparation for retirement, I want to save up as much as possible.

However, Aina-chan looked like she wants to raise a cat.

I immediately made up my mind.

— Alright. Let's live in the countryside!

I told Aina-chan that we will raise it after we move, and I asked my colleague for the red kitten.



It was easy planning for the future after deciding what we wanted.

I decided to move to the countryside village where my uncle was at. I left the arrangements for housing and a job to him. The rent is less than half the price of the apartment I am living in. Three hurrahs for the countryside!

Coincidentally, the village is close to the place Ritz-kun and Sieglinde lives at. Aina-chan will be relieved as well.

On the day we left, we fetched the kitten from my colleague's place and went to bid farewell to the landlady.

As a show of gratitude, we gave her the jams and sweets Aina-chan made.

While accepting the gifts, the kind landlady told us that it would have been alright to raise cats.

When I told her that it was not the only reason, she accepted it although she looked disappointed.

Aina-chan was on much better terms with the landlady than she was with me. The landlady softly embraced Aina-chan and patted her.

Then, with a sad expression, Aina-chan asked a favour of the landlady.

"Ah, erm, if it's alright with you, can you name this child?"

"Me?"

"So that I can always think of you."

"What!"

At Aina-chan's words, the landlady smiled happily.

The landlady bestowed the name of 'Rossa' to the kitten.

Apparently it means 'red' in the language of her dead husband. I thought that it was perfect for the cat with attractive red fur.

With a new family, we headed to the countryside.

Chapter 91 - Emmerich and the Fickle Kittens — Middle Part

It takes about six hours by carriage to reach the village where my uncle is. It's a rather long trip.

I sent the luggage ahead before us.

The only things we had on hand were small bags with our meals, in addition to a basket holding our new family, Rosa the cat.

It was time to get on the carriage. I confirmed the destination with the driver and got on.

Outside the window, steam vehicles passed by. Recently, it seems like there are more and more of them.

The roads for carriages were getting scarcer.

While witnessing such change of the times, I left behind the city I grew up in.

The carriages were full.

Somehow, we managed to secure seats on the last carriage. Aina-chan sat in the corner while I sat next to her.

The men inside the carriage stole glances at Aina-chan.

The unblemished silver hair and the clear blue eyes were rare after all. Stop staring, I wanted to shout.

However, she did not mind the cheeky gazes, focusing only on the kitten peeking out from the basket.

In a town on the way, we stopped for about half an hour.

There was a park nearby so we decided to have lunch there.

I then realised that there were no blankets to sit on so laid out my coat for her to sit on.

“Why do I have to sit on something like your clothes.”

“But otherwise, your skirt will get dirty.”

When I persistently offered it, Aina-chan narrowed her eyes as if to glare at me and sat down.

Rossa, in the basket, was on her lap. The kitten was getting fed the fish that was brought for lunch.

“.....Lunch, you can have them.”

“Ah, yes.”

Because Aina-chan had not touched her food, I was waiting like an obedient dog.

Since I got permission from the owner, I opened the lunchbox.

Sandwich with meat and vegetables, skewered meatballs, grilled sausages and soft egg rolls. Meat fried with spices in wrapped in cheese and vegetables. Braised root vegetables with thinly sliced ham decorating the lunchbox like flowers.

The lunchbox was all filled with things I like.

Even though I said thanks, she rejected it saying that she merely made it from leftover ingredients.

Still, I felt happy.

I placed enough food for Aina-chan on a dish and then started eating.

They were all great. It tasted even better since we ate together.

An hour later. The carriage left as was scheduled.

We arrived at the village we are moving to eight hours later.

There were places with deep snow on our way so the ride was slightly delayed.

I visited the village my uncle lives in when I was young. It felt somewhat similar to Ritz-kun's village. It would be nice if she liked it, I thought.

It was a small countryside village.

It had even fewer people than the village Aina-chan was living in.

Since it was such a place, one had to be careful about one's reputation.

It would be impossible for an unrelated man and woman to live under one roof like we could in the city.

Therefore, I carefully discussed it with her and filled out the marriage registration forms to the country.

Of course, under the condition that the relation would be broken if Aina-chan came to dislike it.

I am planning on returning her to her country eventually.

I am only taking custody of her until the wrath of her family dies down.

I don't know what will happen afterwards.

It might be nice to move to Ritz-kun's village, but if Aina-chan does not want it I have no choice but to live here.

Well, the military did not fit with my nature, so it might not be so bad spending time leisurely here.

Uncle and aunt welcomed me, whom they were seeing after a decade and a few years, as well as Aina-chan.

They asked if we wanted a sheep or a goat for a marriage gift, but to be honest I didn't know the difference so I chose randomly.

The new house was kept neat by my aunt.

It was much more spacious than the apartment we lived in. Bedroom, private room, living room, kitchen, toilet, bathroom.

While I was checking the rooms, I realised something important.

— What should I do? There's only one bedroom!!

It was a natural thing since we were moving in as a married couple.

"A-Aina-chan, you can use this place."

"How come?"

"I'll sleeping on the chair in my room."

"As if that could relieve your fatigue!?"

"It's alright!"

I think we had a similar conversation before.

But really, there won't be any problems.

When I served in the military, I slept on the floor with only newspapers for blankets.

When I told her that, she told me to do whatever I wanted.

Aunt prepared many things dinner, so the two of us received those.

The next day, we organised the luggage.

We also went out shopping to the village shopping district.

Aina-chan was not used to this place. Maybe because of that, she was hiding behind me and clinging to my coat sleeve. Very adorable.

After returning home, we resumed unpacking our luggage.

There were two cups.

“Drink this after two hours! Because I won’t brewing anymore! After two hours, even if there’s dust, just drink it anyway! Endure it!” was what I was expecting, but the second cup was Aina-chan’s. I felt relieved inside.

When I brought a cushion over from the couch and offered a seat for her, Aina-chan sat down without saying anything.

We sat in between the luggage and ate the fruit cakes we bought from the store before.

In the pocket near the belly on her apron, there was Rossa the cat. I felt envious that the cat was in a good position.

Noticing my gaze, Aina-chan explained why while caressing Rossa with a benign expression.

“This child, it gets sad if we leave it alone.”

“Eh, hehh~”

I wanted to say that I also become if I’m neglected, but I was afraid of hearing, “Oh, really,” so I kept silent.

The cake we bought from the store was dry and crumbling, causing one to become thirsty.

The cake Aina-chan makes are moist and delicious.

When I said that, she scolded me, saying that she can’t make them because she did not have the ingredients.

It seems that I was rushing her.

“Still, eating cake with Aina-chan is still very pleasurable.”

“.....”

The words I blurted out were cleanly ignored.

Maybe she couldn't hear them because I said it quickly in a soft voice.

What should I say, it might be the first time spending time leisurely with the two of us.

When we were in the city, every day was hectic.

Even on holidays, I slept in from exhaustion. I feel really sorry for that.

It would have been nice to take her out more for sightseeing, but it was too late for regrets.

Even in such a life, Aina-chan never said a word of complaint.

Rather, she supported me through the meals and packed lunches.

I realised that I never properly thanked her. It might have been too late, but I lowered my head regardless.

"Aina-chan."

"What?"

"Thank you."

"!?"

Aina-chan was stupefied for a moment. After that, she asked, what happened?

Even when she asked that, I couldn't answer for some reason. I could only murmur words of gratitude.

Aina-chan calmly stared at me.

She had a quizzical glance.

Really, how should I convince her that I'm not a suspicious person.

The only way may be to come out honestly with my feelings.

In the end, I decided to tell her the feelings I had for a long time.

"Aina-chan."

"So, what?"

"I, love you, Aina-chan."

"!"

Aina-chan's big eyes opened even wider.

I felt both regret and relief from saying it, that I got a very ambivalent feeling.

There weren't any reactions for a while, so I cautiously took a peek at Aina-chan's face.

"Ah."

"——!!"

She quickly turned away.

Aina-chan was blushing deep red.

"Aina, you don't like me?"

When I recklessly asked, she lowered her head.

However, a little while later, she shook her head.

“—Then, do you like me?”

There weren't many opportunities like this, so I asked.

Aina-chan blushed even redder.

“Ah, sorry, erm,”

She was getting teary eyed.

I wasn't planning on making her cry.

I might be forgiven if I touch the floor with my forehead in repentance.

I kneeled and then bowed down.

“Erm, I'm really sorr-”

“—Rossa!”

My words of apology overlapped with Aina-chan calling Rossa.

Rossa leaped out of the apron's front pocket.

Because she stood up suddenly, reaching out for the kitten, she lost her balance.

Of course, I was able to catch her.

“Th-Thanks”

“No worries.”

Rather, shouldn't I be the one saying thanks? I almost blurted that out carelessly.

I was reluctant to part but I helped her up.

Aina-chan had a nice scent, and her body was very soft.

It was so splendid that I felt that I could imagine things for a few months after this.

Because I felt that I wasn't suppressing my vicious thoughts well enough, I hid my mouth with my hand to not get caught.

Though I might have given it away through the gaze.

Chapter 92 - Emmerich and the Fickle Kittens — Final Part

Uncle's marriage gift arrived.

A goat. A nanny goat.

It seems that it can be milked only in the winter. I was told to dote on it because it is tame.

Indeed, it is behaving very well next to Aina.

Since it can't be left out in the open, I used materials lying around and built a goat house, with borrowed tools from uncle. When laid hay inside, it looked pretty good.

It seemed that the goat was satisfied as well, because it quickly went into the shed and rested inside.

"The goat is unexpectedly docile. I was surprised."

"Apparentl-Uwah!!"

While we were talking, I felt a strong shock from my back.

I managed perform a break-fall into a roll on the floor.

When I turned around to see who it was, the goat was standing proudly in the light.

"H-How come.....?"

The goat lifted its forelegs and stood on its hind legs.

That excited appearance was as though it was showing hostility.

.....Could it be, that I'm being threatened?"

Right away, Aina-chan tied the goat to a stake in the ground.

I found out later that goats are creatures of wild temperament.

On a closer look, its eyes are rather frightening.

Come to think of it, the sheep in the village were grazing the grass in a dignified manner. I regretted that I should have chosen a sheep.

I also told Aina-chan to be careful, but if it's next to her it seems to be docile.

It even easily lets itself be milked.

Why is it aggressive only to me. I wanted to complain to the goat.

Worst of all, it seemed like the goat was trying to headbutt me whenever possible.

One time, when Aina-chan was waiting for me in front of the door, I ran up to her with a smile. Just before I could enter the house, it headbutted me at my side.

Coincidentally, it stabbed the knee, a key point of the human body, so I leapt up greatly.

Well, Aina-chan worried for me and gently nursed me so it was good.

Uncle gave me an absurd present.

I really want to thank him.



Outside the house, I am dominated by the savage goat, but inside I felt healed.

The red cat I received from my colleague, Rossa, was such a baby, following Aina-chan everywhere.

In addition, Rossa had no care in the world for me.

However, the way Aina-chan makes a blissful expression while having Rossa on her lap and caressing its chin, forehead and waist is unbearable. The cat purring with the same expression is also pleasing.

Recently, we had such leisurely moments.

In the city, it was unimaginable for the two of us to be even sitting down together.

With some months having passed since its birth, Rossa was growing well.

Its fur was neat, and aunt also said that the cat is pretty.

It also somewhat resembles Aina-chan. She also has clear almond-shaped eyes.

It might be true that cats and dogs take after their owners.

“Aina-chan, should I brew some coffee?”

“You can do that?”

“Ah, more or less.”

Because I had been living alone for a long time.

Come to think of it, it's been a while since I last brewed coffee. Ever since she lived with me, I never brewed coffee.

Aina-chan said that she'll brew coffee because the coffee I brew is fishy, but because Rossa was sleeping she couldn't move.

“I’ll do my best.”

“The coffee in the red can deep inside the shelf is for guests.”

“Understood.”

It seems that the coffee brewing machine was handed down from the landlady. I could also see new products.

Come to think of it, the coffee I had back home might have been spoiled.

I ground coffee beans. I set filters in a special container, put ground coffee and then poured water.

While I was waiting for the coffee to drip, I got bored.

When I told Aina-chan “I want to eat some snacks if there are any,” she told me that she had the cake she made yesterday in the shelf.

The cake was made with dried fruits. When I sliced it, a subtle sweet scent flowed out.

I placed cake slices on a plate and then it was time to wait for coffee again.

Once the coffee finished brewing, I poured them into cups and placed sugar and milk next to them on a plate. I then brought them out to the living room.

When I sat down next to Aina-chan, she glared at me.

Since we never sat down together before, she might be wary of me.

Could it be that I am still a suspicious foreigner to her?

I don’t want to ask.

Anyhow, I placed the snacks and a cup in front of Aina-chan.

“Aina, you want three spoons of sugar and plenty of milk, right?”

”.....That’s right.”

I stirred in sugar and milk and served them to her.

Rossa was sleeping soundly on Aina-chan’s lap. Since it would be dangerous if the coffee spilled, I softly lifted her and placed her in the basket that was also her bed.

When I returned to Aina-chan’s side and asked if I could have some cake, she replied that I could.

I soon started eating Aina-chan’s handmade cake.

A bite using a fork.

Delicious!!

It was soft and had a slight alcohol flavour. It also had dried fruits so the taste was expressive.

Aina-chan, this is very delicious! You might even be able to sell it!

When I placed the cake down on the table and stared at her to thank her, Aina-chan was staring at me while blushing deeply.

“Ah, sorry!”

At that moment, I put myself in Aina-chan’s shoes.

A disorderly foreign man suddenly demanded sweets and then shamelessly started eating next to her.

Oh no oh no!! So disgusting!!

When I tried to stand up in panic, Aina-chan grabbed my sleeve.

“Eh!?”

I flinched from surprise.

“.....”

“Ah, erm.”

Aina-chan merely stared up at me with teary eyes.

For now, I apologised for being such a revolting man.

But Aina-chan said, “It’s different,” shaking her head.

What should I do? I have no idea what it is that she is thinking or what she wants.

The only thing I discovered was that Aina-chan sees me as a disgusting person.

When I fumbled around my pocket in panic, there was pen and paper inside.

I handed that to her with trembling hands for her to write what she wants to say.

Having received pen and paper, Aina-chan jotted down something. It seemed like writing the words themselves, but she didn’t hand the paper over.

I was in an awkward posture, so I sat down on a chair.

I wasn’t shaking, but I was very nervous.

It seemed like that was also the case for Aina-chan, who was peering into the paper.

Just what could she have written.

-Chirin- The bell on Rossa's collar rang.

The kitten that had awoken jumped, aiming for Aina-chan's lap.

"Kyaa!"

"Ah!"

Because Rossa jumped in, the paper in Aina-chan's hand fluttered around.

I grabbed the piece of paper that fell onto the floor.

"!?"

The moment I held it in my hand, the words came into my eyes.

It was an unthinkable thing.

"Ich mag dich sehr. (I love you)"

I was so surprised that I got a nosebleed.



I never realised that Aina-chan liked me.

No, on the contrary, there would be no reason for her to make such delicious meals for someone she does not care for.

I was just dense.

In this way, the two of us lived happily together after we opened up to each other.

Aina-chan is still very prickly, but even that is irresistibly cute.

We spend our pleasant honeymoon life peacefully.

Emmerich and the Fickle Kittens — Finished.

Chapter 93 - Rose Liqueur and a Pleasant Party

One day, a lot of luggage arrived from father-in-law. When I opened it with Sieg to see what it was, it was the fruit liqueur I had made before.

“I completely forgot about it.”

“I thought about it.”

Well, they are drinks for Sieg.

The liqueurs were made from many things, such as apricots, plums, and citruses. Since I gave some to father-in-law and grandfather as well, about five arrived for us. In the letter enclosed inside, Father-in-law commented that they were delicious. I glad he enjoyed it.

“Come to think of it, what happened to the rose liqueur?”

Even when I peered into the box I couldn’t find it.

Could father-in-law have accidentally drunk it!? I felt a little uneasy.

The bright red rose liqueur is for Sieg. It’s a special drink for her.

“No, I brought the rose liqueur with me. It’s in my room.”

“Was that so!?”

I’ve been frequenting Sieg’s room so much that the door sill might get worn out, but I never realised.

Apparently, she’s been storing it in a dark place.

“It’s dyed in a vivid shade.”

“I see~”

It seems that Sieg was observing it once a day.

Though she said that it's dyed in a pretty colour, I don't want to see it.

The red rose in the language of flowers means, 'I love you.' It makes me feel as though I whispered that into her ear.

Thinking of that, it's very embarrassing to see the drink.

Or so I thought, but then Sieg offered an unexpected invitation.

“Shall we taste it together tonight?”

“!”

Eh~ No way~ It's embarrassing..... As if. I replied, “Gladly!” with a glint in my eyes.



The season is summer.

It's a season where the village ladies are busy picking berries.

This year, mother was brimming with enthusiasm, and filled the baskets full of berries.

Also, she made great amounts of jam, alcohol, sauce and cake.

Living with mother made a life a lot easier. Both physically and mentally.

She is also friendly with Sieg, for which I am glad.

However, even though I tell her to take it easy, to not overwork, she does not listen, saying that this is the norm.

She can even do gardening with Arno on her back, singing lullabies to put him to sleep. I couldn't help but revere her as a superhuman housewife.

Fortunately, she was enjoying going out to the forest, cooking, and singing lullabies, so I am spoiling myself on her while thinking that it's a relief.

When I thanked mother again, she gave me a blank look.

"Hey, Ritchan."

"What is it?"

"Ritchan, you were overworking yourself."

"I-Is that right?"

"Yes."

When we turn 18 in this village, we have to fend for ourselves.

By then, we learn how to make traditional handicrafts, how to hunt and how to butcher animals.

It's natural to work every day to support one's family. I have been living a busy life for a decade.

However, mother told me that that is not a normal life.

"Ritchan, you have work as a lord as well, don't you?"

"Well....., I don't do anything important though."

"That's not true."

"Thank you."

Then, mother silently stared at her son's face. It felt as though she was misty-eyed so I felt a chill.
The reason was revealed soon.

"I'm sorry."

"Eh!?"

From the sudden development of mother apologising to me and hugging me, I froze up.
I'm turning thirty now, why am I getting hugged by mother?
It's a mystery.

It seemed that mother was worried more about father than she was for me.
Of course, I can understand that.
He's a man of amazing character, there's no telling what might happen if he's left alone.

"But you were lonely, weren't you?"

"....."

I would be lying if I said that I didn't feel lonely.
However, if I had my family with me, I might have been a different person than how I am now.
I might not have married Sieg.

Thinking of that, well, isn't fine, I thought.

"Mother, from here on, let's all work hard together."

"Yes. With Linde-chan and Arno-chan, let's all work hard together!"

"....."

I seriously wondered if it was alright to go ahead like this while excluding my father who was in a faraway land.



For the fun banquet with Sieg at night, I made side dishes.

Still, the sky was growing dark so I decided to make something simple.

It's hard to cook outside without sunlight.

If it's summer, then it should be fish!!

From the nearby port, a merchant visits everyday hauling fresh fish.

First, I processed the salmon I bought today. I halved one half that we were having for ourselves.

I left the other half for Ruruporon to cook.

The thick piece of salmon is seasoned with salt and pepper and then I made slits to put cheese in. After that, it is wrapped in thinly sliced bacon, skewered on, and then grilled with butter. It's best when it's warm, but it still tastes good when it is cold.

The second dish is made by cutting up seasoned salmon into bite-sized pieces and frying them with bread crumbs.

This also goes well with alcohol.

Finally, there's a dish of salmon, dried mushrooms, cheese and chopped potatoes in the oven. It looks like gratin.

The finished dishes are placed on a tray then served to the second floor bedroom. To not get dust on it, I placed cloth over it.

For dinner, Ruruporon served a splendid meal.

Arno can now eat bland semi-solid food. Since he couldn't use the spoon yet, we are feeding him.

During that time, all the family does not eat and only watches Arno. It's an enjoyable time.

"Arno-chan weaned early~ Good boy~"

"....."

"....."

It was almost as though she was comparing to someone else, but I pretended to not have heard. Sieg also cleared her throat to change the mood.

After the meal, we reflected on our work today, put Arno to sleep and relaxed.

"Mother, you're good at this now."

Mother, leading a well-regulated life, rests early.

"Arno-cha~n~ sleepy time~"

"No, mother, it's alright."

"But~ still~"

"You've been sleeping with him for five days now, haven't you?"

"But's it's alright~"

Sometimes I want to take care of my son.

However, mother argued that she wanted to sleep with Arno because she's lonely.

Maybe it could be that she was being considerate for our nighttime fun (drinking). Still, there wouldn't have been a problem since Arno does not wake easily once he goes off to sleep.

But I decided to gladly receive mother's kindness.

Sieg and I sat down on the bed and opened bottles of alcohol on a round table.

First was the plum (pflaume) liqueur.

Sieg drank it straight, while I had it with sparkling water and lemon juice.

The colour was light brown like black tea. Apparently it's good for recovering fatigue and for shoulder pains. It might be fitting for summer.

"Ah, it's delicious."

"It's sweet."

Maybe because I had it with sparkling water, it had a refreshing sweetness to it. When I got a sip from Sieg's cup, which had the unadulterated drink, it had a different taste. It had a deep flavour along with a sweet taste.

We also tried other fruit liqueur. The neat tasting citrus liqueur seemed to be to Sieg's liking. I thought that it was a failure because of the bitter flavour, but Sieg was okay with it.

She also liked the side dishes. I felt happy. I worked hard to see this moment.

We drank the rose liqueur at the end.

"It's dyed nicely."

"It has a rosy tinge."

Maybe because we used only a bit of alcohol, it was dyed nicely in red.

When I opened the bottle, a rich rosy scent flowed out. I recalled that rose liqueur was also called drinkable perfume.

When I poured some into a glass and squeezed some lemon into it, the colour turned into an even deeper shade of red.

Sieg took a look at the glass by the light from the lantern, and then tilted the glass.

“H-How is it?”

Sieg smiled without saying a word.

From seeing such a rare expression, I ended up clutching my chest.

What is it, what was with that mysteriously alluring smile!?

It makes me want to flounder around in the bed.

“Ritz, you too.”

“.....Waa, thank you~”

I somehow managed to calm my raging heart and took a sip of the rose liqueur.

The moment I took a sip, the sensation of a deep rosy scent flowed into my body. It was slightly sweet and bitter, and had an adult’s flavour to it.

Sieg murmured about the time she received the bouquet. She said that she was so happy.

Meanwhile, I wrapped my head in my arms, wondering why I was being so pretentious.

“Can I have this?”

“Please, please”

If possible, please enjoy it alone, or so I conveyed.

But that wish could not come true.

After that, Sieg enjoyed the rose liqueur while watching my embarrassed expression.

To become a side dish for alcohol, how regretful.

Chapter 94 - Bear Stew and a Good Wife's Stew.

We were continuing to play being husband and wife.

With the excuse of not making people around us find out, I now have more opportunity to be close to her.

Maybe since I overdid it sometimes, she is acting a little cold recently.

I might be able to do this only now. After the contract period is over, the two of us become strangers. So I kept apologising to her inside my head.

I silently stared at her and hugged her by the waist. Getting hugged, Sieg was frozen up.

I caressed her hair and whispered, "I won't do anything you don't want," and waited for her to leave herself to me.

A while later, Sieg entrusted some of her weight to me.

The way how she awkwardly lets me do whatever is unbearable.

I wonder if I was famished for the warmth of people. When I hugged Sieg tightly, I felt relaxed.

I felt uneasy that I was only one in bliss.

Since I had no plans to ignore Sieg's feelings, I asked.

"Sieg, if you don't like it, push me away."

"....."

Sieg said "No," in a frail voice and then stayed still.

If she meant to reject me, I would already have been slammed into wall.

She is doing her best to play 'the role of the wife'. It was disheartening to think that, but the fact that we were connected now was more important.

I fulfilled my desires using Sieg's effort.

Will this remain as a good memory?

Or will this remain as a sad recollection of the happy past?

“Sieglinde.....”

“I love you,” such heavy words would be too much for her so I kept them in my heart.

I knew that these actions will be in vain, but I couldn’t stop myself.

My temporary couple life with Sieg continued like this.



It was time to eat the bear meat we received from Teoporon.

Since butchering and maturing bear meat was new to me, it took some time.

The way it’s matured is also different from other game.

First, the meat is carved up into different parts and then those parts are wrapped in clean cloth. Then, those are put in a box filled with ice from winter and stored in the underground cold storage for about a week. After that, the meat is taken out from the ice box then matured for about a month in the cold storage.

The important thing to look out for is the humidity. If there’s moisture, the meat rots. There are pipes connected to the underground storage for ventilation. The ice are brought from the mountains so they do not easily melt, but dew forms in summer so they have to be wiped frequently. In addition, charcoal from the house is placed in to remove odour and humidity.

The bear Teoporon hunted was in a period where it was viciously eating food after waking up from hibernation so the meat is delicious.

Furthermore, it was a female bear. There’s fat on it which is guaranteed to be tasty.

The meat brought over from the underground cold storage was finished well.

“Sieg, look, it’s bear meat.”

“.....Aa.”

Sieg frowned after seeing the meat colour.

It’s no surprise. The fat is turning yellow, and the meat is darkish.

However, this is the best state of matured bear meat.

I received bear thigh meat sometimes from Teoporon. I don’t know how many times I failed so far. This time, I took care to not let it rot, so it succeeded splendidly.

Bear meat has strong game odour so one has to be careful when cooking it.

It has to be grilled with finely chopped herbs, or boiled in red wine while removing the scum, or simply roasted then eaten with sweet and sour citrus sauce to remove the smell.

Today, Ruruporon has the day off, so the two of us started working at the kitchen behind the house.

The meat is placed in red wine and herbs to remove the odour.

It was taken out of the cold storage after wiping the water off, and then it was chopped into bite-sized pieces before putting them in the pot.

Other vegetables are also chopped into suitable sizes. We used onions, carrots, mushrooms, tomatoes, along with many kinds of herbs.

First, the bear meat was boiled with herbs and vegetable peels and scraps.

Since the scum started rising, I removed them using a spoon. After it boiled well, only the meat was taken out and the rest were thrown out.

Red wine and clear soup was poured into a pot in a one-to-one ratio, and then the rest of the ingredients were put in. After that, it was boiled well over a light fire.

Once the ingredients were cooked, I added in a jar marinated tomatoes that I made as preserved food, and then I added condiments to add the finishing touches to the flavour.

After that, it was boiled for another hour.

“It takes a lot of work.”

“Since it has strong gamy smell and also because it easily becomes tough, the cooking process is hard as well.”

Still, I love bear meat.

Sieg helped out with the long cooking process without complaint. For the boiling, we took shifts. We cooked while we did gardening.

When dinner was done, I was smiling on my own peering into the pot of stew.

Sieg looked a little exasperated.

“Thank you for helping me.”

“No, anything Ritz makes is delicious. I’ll be looking forward to it.”

“I’m glad!”

Sieg really is kind, saying the right things.

She really is a great wife.

When I tasted it a little, the bear stew was prepared very well.

I formulated plans to have bread and wine, as well as cheese.

When I headed for the front door with the pot, I came to face guests.

“Ah, Lord Revontulet.”

“I-It’s been a while.”

The people in front of the door were the village head of the neighbouring village and his second son.

Come to think of it, I had totally forgotten that we had an appointment today.

Once a year, we have a dinner with the head of the neighbouring village and exchange information.

I was too excited about the newlywed life with Sieg that I forgot about this important occasion.

“Is she the rumoured wife?”

“Ah, yes, she is my wife Sieglinde.”

Sieg greeted the village head and his son.

The second son was around twenty-five years old. If I recall correctly, he was still single.

Maybe because he was bothered about my wife, he stole cursory glances.

Since it was time to dine with our guests, I offered them seats in the living room.

As for the bear stew, Sieg took it to the kitchen.

While I kept our guests company, Sieg served herb tea. After that, she also prepared the meal.

On the table, there were bread Ruruporon baked yesterday along with thick cheese, pickled herrings and bird liver spread. It was an extravagant meal.

The bear stew arrived at the end. It was a masterpiece I made with my wife.

Sieg removed the sediments in the wine and poured them into glasses.

After a toast, it was time to eat.

The bear meat that was prepared well was very soft. The fat melted on the tongue. The sour flavour of the tomato went well with bear meat. The gamy odour was nonexistent too.

When I glanced at Sieg who was sitting next to me, our eyes met coincidentally. From her happy expression, I could tell how she felt. I can say that I did my best for this moment.

The village head also praised the taste of the bear stew.

There were a lot so I offered seconds.

“My, it was the first time I had such delicious bear stew.”

“I’m glad you thought so.”

His stoic son was nodding silently next to him as well.

“Even so, it is a pity.”

“?”

When I asked what was a pity, the village head something grand.

His son, next to him, looked flustered.

“I would have liked to have a lady that cooks so well as my son’s wife.”

“.....”

“.....”

The two of us froze in surprise.

However, Sieg corrected him promptly.

“Erm, it was my husband that made the stew.”

“Truly!?”

“.....”

The village head looked surprised, while his son clearly looked disappointed.

I had thought that a correction was unnecessary, but it would be troubling if Sieg was requested to be married after our contract was over, so I concluded that it was the right choice to correct them.

Since the village head asked me, I wrote down the recipe and then we parted ways.

We got over it well, and they did not suspect my relation with Sieg either, so I felt very relieved.

Thus went the day I had bear meat with Sieg.

Chapter 95 - Luca Salonen Eskola's Activity Report — First Part

First Year. Today I went out to the forest to pick branches again.

As long as one doesn't go into the deep parts of the forest one won't encounter dangerous beasts.

Just in case, a dog is brought with me.

I wasn't taught how to shoot yet.

Father told me that he will teach me once I can hunt one rabbit a day for three days.

As for the result, I could not yet hunt a single one. Father also said that he caught his first prey when he was thirteen years old. I still had two years until then.

There's such a circumstance. The only equipment I have are a bow and arrows and a knife.

In this period, the sky quickly grows dark so I have to finish quickly.

When I gathered enough branches and thought of returning, the dog was staring somewhere far away. It sometimes does these things so I decided to leave it alone.

The surroundings were growing blurry.

This is why I don't like winter, or so I thought, then I noticed the dog hiding behind me.

It's a dog that doesn't fear even bears, just what could it have been frightened by. When I squinted my eyes, I could see the silhouettes of people.

Two of them.

Could it be, 'the village's best hunter' Grandfather Bergholm? He has a terrifying face that would be able to silence a wailing child through fear.

The approaching figures became clearer.

A large man was coming from in front of me.

He had brown skin and for some reason he did not have any clothes on for the upper half of his body. Moreover, he was walking barefoot with only thin-looking pants. On his ears, he had

colourful feathers. His face was tough and deeply chiseled. He was completely different from the rest of the village.

I remember father saying it before. He said that foreigners were residing in the lord's place for a few years now. I had not seen them before until then.

I was overwhelmed by the sight.

The appearance was already amazing, but then he even had a large deer on his shoulders.

Deer of that size is one that adults take a lot of time to drag on sleighs. Just what kind of man is the giant lifting it easily?

I couldn't move from the spot.

The foreign giant did not even glance at me when he passed by.

As I stayed there, I came to face another person.

It was a woman following behind the giant.

She was taller than me. Probably the giant's daughter. Her eyes were similar to his. In her hand, she had a long spear that did not match her size. It was probably her father's.

It was the first time I saw someone with brown skin and black hair. The eyes were black too. It was fascinating.

The woman silently stared at me.

When I said that I just happened to look, she tilted her head.

Then I noticed that she a rabbit in her hand.

She had a bow and arrows on her back. I wonder if she caught it herself?

I was curious so I asked.

However, the woman merely tilted her head, without saying anything.

Seeing me point at the rabbit so many times, she might have mistaken it as me wanting the prey, as she held it out to me.

As if I would receive prey that a woman hunted!? Taking me for a fool!!

I ignored the woman holding the rabbit out and ran all the way to the village.

From that day, I fiercely trained handling the bow and arrow.

As a result, a year later, I was able to catch rabbits three days in a row.

I met the woman after a long time in the village, so I showed her the rabbit, but she only tilted her head.

I felt as though I was being belittled that I grew angry.

Second year. I managed to make my father teach how to handle guns.

I remember starting with the weakest, the air gun.

The air gun is a gun that shoots bullets through air, without using gunpowder. I'm still not sure about the structure. It's said to be weak, but it has enough power to pierce flesh so father kept emphasizing that I have to be careful when handling it.

Only small animals can be caught with air guns. Medium-sized animals like the boars can only be dealt lethal wounds with shotguns that use gunpowder.

Finally, when I got used to handling guns, I learned how to use rifles.

Rifles are the most lethal guns, able to take down large animals such as bears.

Hunting bears is not recommended because of the dangers, but all the mean train to be able to defend against bears.

I'll quickly catch large animals and surprise that woman.

The foreign woman was still curt, and she only tilted her head in reaction to my words.

If she's living in this village, it would be nice if she at least learned the language.

I got angry every time I talked to her because it felt like I was losing.

Third year. Feeling that I now had enough proficiency with air guns, father allowed me to use shotguns.

Now I can hunt boars!

But the woman's attitude did not change.

Even when I showed her my hunt, she merely stared down at me in silence.

Looking down at me, I don't like it! She slowly grew bigger and is looking down at me.

She's definitely going to become a huge woman like her father. What a monster!!

It could be that she's a descendant of the legendary giants.

I'm much taller than my mother. She's the weird one.

I'll overtake her height some time!!

When I drank reindeer milk from that thought, I was hit by my father who scolded me to not waste valuable goods.

Fourth year. By the time I was getting used to using the rifle, I coincidentally met the huge woman in the forest.

She was still using bow and arrow.

I wonder if the impoverished lord told her not use guns? I'm not sure.

Even when I asked directly she merely tilted her head and did not say anything.

She did not hunt anything yet. However, I had a boar on my sleigh.

It was the biggest I had ever hunted so far. I pointed towards it to boast it.

The woman merely stared at the hunt.

I started feeling restless because she did not smile or applaud.

While we were wasting time, the snow started falling.

The wind was growing stronger, so it was clear that it will turn into a blizzard.

Even when I told her that I'm going home, she stared vacantly. Rather, she tightened her grip on her bow and tried to proceed into the forest.

Is she an idiot!? There's no way an arrow will fly true in these conditions.

Hunting also involves observing the forest.

In other words, it's important to learn how to read nature.

If one overexerts oneself in hunting when the forest is rough one might die.

Just what was she learning from her father. Or maybe she did not learn.

Since it couldn't be helped, I gave her a ptarmigan and a rabbit I had in a bag.

I told her to take this bag and go home today.

The woman eyes went back and forth between me and the bag.

It's alright so take it, I told her.

Then the woman did something mysterious.

She suddenly held up her fist and pounded it against her chest.

I had no idea what that meant.

More importantly, the snow was blowing harder so I grabbed the woman's hand and headed to the village.

When I arrived at the entrance of the village, the woman's father was waiting there. Just behind him the lord was there as well.

The huge father came over here with a stern expression. Surely, he can't be trying to slap my face, I thought, but he took an unexpected course of action.

The moment he saw his daughter he hugged her.

I thought that it was overprotective of him to dote on such a bulky girl.

The woman was saying something while pointing at me.

Right afterwards, he stood right in front of me.

Did she something bad about me?

Could the terrifying father have found out that I've been saying "Giant woman!" or "You don't even know the language!?"

The woman's father raised his fist with great vigour.

Pathetically, I shut my eyes tightly from the force.

However, the anticipated impact did not come.

When I faintly opened my eyes, the father was pounding his chest with his fist.

So what does that action mean!?!

When I stared at her father again, he bowed once more.

Then, he hugged his daughter again and then they headed into the village.

Since I couldn't get what was going on, I spat curses as I stomped on the ground.

Then, the lord who had very thin presence spoke up.

First, he thanked me for bringing the giant woman back.

I was told that she had a strong sense of responsibility, not coming back from hunting until she has caught prey. She was told to not overexert herself too much, but since those words would not be conveyed events like today might happen, he said.

After that, he taught me the meaning of the action of pounding one's chest with their fist.

Apparently it means 'thank you'.

Of course, depending on the situation, it can mean 'yes', it can be used to mean respect for the other. It has many uses.

Now that I knew the meaning of the mysterious action, I felt a little better.

Then, the lord said that he'll be leaving the giant woman to me.

He said that he's glad that a clumsy girl like her has a friend like me.

I'm not her friend! I said, but the lord grinned like an idiot and said, "Come on~ no need to be shy."

Dammit! Who are you calling her friend!?

I'm going to make her speechless one day! It's not like I want to do something with her!

The lord told me to take care of 'Miruporon' and then he left.

That was the story of the day I found out the name of the giant woman.

Chapter 96 - Luca Salonen Eskola's Activity Report — Middle Part

Fifth Year. Apparently her people express their emotions through gestures.

The lord said that he doesn't understand them very much.

To be with foreigners that one can't communicate with. I was awed.

I sometimes met her in the forest. When she didn't have anything, I gave her small animals such as rabbits.

I'm not really doing it for her. It's just that butchering small animals is a pain.

I recently learned that the action of opening her eyes thinly while loosening the mouth was a smile.

What, so she can smile.



The unpopular lord married and the village was slowly changing.

I didn't see the rumoured wife yet. Apparently, she goes out hunting with the lord, but I didn't have the opportunity to see her yet.

More importantly, the young women of the village are captivated by a red-haired foreign man that came recently.

Believe it or not, the women gather at the store to talk with the guy.

When I happened to pass by the store and took a peek inside, I witnessed something strange.

I was surprised at the range of the women gathered here. From three-year-olds to women in their fifties.

The woman in her fifties was my mother..... Wait, what are you doing there, I wanted to ask.

I saw the rumoured handsome man, but he wasn't all that great.

His hips were slender like a woman's and he didn't have much muscles. As if such a man can support a family.

They're all just dotting on him because he's a city person. His looks weren't bad.

Fortunately, she wasn't among the women.

Since there aren't any other women with black hair and black eyes I could tell at one glance.

After I learned that, I didn't care anymore about this gathering.

I headed out to hunt afterwards.

At night, father asked mother where she had been since noon.

Mother replied with a smile that she was at the gift store to see the handsome person.

So she has no plans to hide it.

Father had a complicated expression on, but he did not scold her.

Since it was him that proposed to my mother, who was a foreigner, while prostrating himself, the hierarchy was clear from a long time ago.

Every time I watch my parents, I end up wondering why.



The next day.

When I exited the house to go out hunting, she was walking outside.

Since she had a large basket, she must have been shopping.

As I approached to talk to her, someone else talked to her before me.

That person was the red-haired man I saw the day before at the gift store.

He took the basket she had and started walking by her side.

My face became hot in an instant.

That turned into rage when I could not see the two of them anymore.

Despicable actions. Despicable even in traditional clothes.

Normally it reaches down to the waist, but the red-haired man had one that reached his knee.

Wearing traditional clothing yet not following tradition, how shallow.

I felt frustrated about other things as well.

She normally looks uninterested in men.

Even when I carry her stuff she merely tilts her head.

Because she was relying on a stranger, I was needlessly infuriated.

That day, my head was so clouded that I couldn't catch a single rabbit.

When I returned empty-handed, I came across her at the fort.

Why is it that I meet her on the day I did not want to meet her at all?

I passed by without trying to get her into my field of vision.

After that, I was frustrated for a few days.

When I went out hunting, I saw that red-haired man with another woman, so I spoke up, thinking that it would be a good opportunity to talk to him.

“Oi!” It was fine up to the point of speaking out with vigour, but I was shocked from hearing the reply.

The voice of the red-haired man was high-pitched for a man.

It was low-pitched for a woman, but it was not a man’s voice.

Just in case, I checked the sex.A woman after all.

Misleading!!

Furthermore, the redhead was the lord’s wife. So that’s why she was so friendly with that person.

Now that the misunderstanding was cleared up, I didn’t care anymore.

I thought of apologising, but all I did was ignore her so I thought that it would be fine.

Sixth year. The village is still peace itself.

A big change would be that I got close to the soldiers at the fort.

When I talked to them, they were pretty interesting.

The restaurant at the fort sometimes had food from the city so I sometimes went there as well.

It was about her.

They talked about how one person has a unique appearance but is not bad.

Moreover they said that she had a nice figure.

She did not wear the traditional clothes of the village.

She wore exotic clothes.

In winter, she wears coats so she's no different from the rest of the villages, but the difference is clear in summer.

The village women don't reveal their skin, but as for her, what should I say, it's quite open.

Her chests can be clearly seen, and her belly is exposed. Her skirt only reaches her knees, revealing her legs.

Not even city women dress like that, apparently.

However, the soldiers said that they're afraid to court her because her father is scary.

Indeed, I can sympathise.

Furthermore, we can't even communicate, so it's not someone one might want to court with a complacent attitude.

The topic gradually changed. Although it didn't change that the topic was about women.

Apparently, a woman who was rather popular among the soldiers were taken away by a foreigner.

When I asked who it was, I found out that it was the granddaughter of grandfather Bergholm.

The name was Aina, I believe?

The soldiers were disappointed, but she's a woman with a strong personality. I don't want to marry such a woman.

Men in their marriageable age were all thirsting for women.

They wanted to marry quickly.

I had no idea about marrying.

In my house, my older brother had married so it wasn't that noisy.

Households with only one child are being fussy.

It was a problem that did not matter for me.

Seventh year. Recently, that person was socialising with a woman.

The other person is the granddaughter of grandfather Bergholm that recently came back from foreign lands.

She came after a year and half of living together with a man, who came here with her.

I could see the two of them looking pleased quite often.

I then realised that I had not seen her with other women.

I wonder if she is also becoming like a woman.

Well, it's not related to me though.

Eighth year. Father started urging me to marry since I was turning 19.

He told me to go find a wife at the port while selling fish since marrying with village women will make it hard to have children.

It's not a joke, he said, but I ignored father's orders.

While I was coming back from gathering mushrooms for my mother, I came across her.

There were occasions where I was surprised by her, there were times that I told her that she's a giant woman or she's walking around to hook men. I did some harsh things to her.

Though I didn't feel like doing that now, not at all.

Probably, it was because she was wearing the traditional clothes of this village.

She looked much cuter than usual.

I regret saying such harsh things to her.

Also, I decided that I'll stop talking to her after today.

I only say harsh things when I meet her.

Not honest at all.

She did not have any reaction. She only stared at the ground without moving.

I couldn't bear the silence, so I grabbed her shoulder and asked if she was listening.

After looking into her eyes, I thought some things.

Why don't I have the endurance and the learning ability?

Seeing me like that, she raised her voice.

It was a loud voice so I ended up flinching.

Rather, that was the first time I heard her voice.

It was quite cute, mismatched to her appearance..... Wait, that wasn't the problem.

While I was wondering why I got so surprised, she told me that I grew taller in the language of this country.

Indeed, I grew taller than her some time ago.

When I was young, I was hung up on overtaking her height, but recently I did not care too much about it so I forgot about it.

More importantly, when did she learn to speak.....

I wonder if she learned from the woman she always hung out with, granddaughter Bergholm?

Which means that she can now understand the harsh words from before.

Beads of sweat formed on my brows.

I backed away to quickly get away from here.

However, she spoke out to me clumsily with the words she just learned.

You're asking why I keep talking to you!? That's obvious!!

I had a clear answer in my head, but I couldn't say it out loud.

I adequately evaded the question and ran away.

From the day after that, she actively started striking up conversation with me, enjoying the exchange.

I never thought that our positions would be reversed.

Today also began by correcting her wrong words.

She was so talkative that there was no end to the retorts I had to make.

Chapter 97 - Luca Salonen Eskola's Activity Report — Last Part

Ninth year. Now that we can communicate through words, I could understand many things about Miruporon.

I learned that she was unexpectedly talkative. Well, it might be since we are 'friends'.

It seems that Miruporon hunts on holidays.

Today, we talked about the cat the Bergholms raise.

Cat fur is different from dog fur or reindeer fur apparently.

She was talking about it so happily, so I asked if she wanted to raise a cat.

Miruporon shook her head. She said that there are only lynxes (ilves) in the area.

It seems that there are stray cats in the city, but here cats cannot live without human assistance so they can't be found here.

She looked a little disappointed.

Then, Miruporon made a request. She asked if she can touch my hair since they're soft like cat fur.

I got angry and told her to not treat my hair like cat fur, but she looked dejected so I specially let her touch them.

She looked happy as she said that they feel better than cat fur.

I couldn't help it so I told her that she can sometimes touch them.

Tenth year. Maybe because a child was born to my older brother and his wife, father is pestering me to marry.

He demanded me to go to the port to sell the fish from the lakes and find a wife.

People around my age had all married too.

Even though I was over twenty, I did not feel like marrying.

Today, I ended up fighting with my old father again.

I hunt animals every day, and deposit the money made from selling the fur to the house.

What's his problem! I felt rage welling up inside me.

My older brother has triplets. The house is at peace.

However, father said that it's not the case. No idea what he's talking about.

In the end, mother had to intervene and mediate.

Since it was almost time to meet up with Miruporon, I left father to mother.

Miruporon was quietly waiting at the entrance of the fort.

She had a basket, so I asked what it was. She replied that she made lunch. To be eaten in the forest, I think.

The autumn forest had been dyed vividly.

A few days later, a thin layer of snow will form on the ground.

There aren't many days left for us to go out in a picnicking mood.

In the forest, we hunted a rabbit, a duck, and boars, two of each kind.

The small prey were placed in bags, and the boars were hauled on to sleighs before we took a break by the river.

The meal was fish pie and fruit juice. Miruporon made them herself.

When I told her that they were delicious, she looked pleased.

After that, we talked until the sun started setting.

Miruporn said that I looked enervated today.

It's probably because I had a fight with father.

Since it would be useless to avoid the question as she would persistently ask, I only told her that I fought with my father.

She then suddenly asked for my hand, so I held out my hand.

Miruporon started writing something on my palms with my fingers.

When I asked what it was, she murmured, “Arafuni nid.”⁴ Spider’s nest, it meant.

—— Like how a spider steadily builds its nest, your efforts will eventually fruition and receive recognition.

She told me that it was a spell holding such a wish.

Those words reached my heart.

After hearing Miruporon talk, I realised it. I realised that I wanted to be gain recognition from father.

I felt like crying for some reason.

Eleventh year. Miruporon’s father is famous for being the master hunter of bears.

He even shares the meat when asked. He’s a kind man unlike what his appearance suggests.

That family assimilated into the surroundings after they moved into the village.

It might also be thanks to Miruporon’s kind mother.

Meanwhile, I started doing something in secret. That was to hunt a bear living in the forest.

Well, of course no results yet.

I saw scratches on trees and droppings with bear fur, but I never met the real thing.

How can I meet a bear in the forest, I agonised in frustration.

4 Arafuni (アラフニ) showed up as spider in Greek (αράχνη (aráchni)) while nido (ニド) showed up as nest in Spanish and Italian. It was confusing, so I left it as the rōmaji readings.

As to why I am aiming for a bear, I am planning to propose to Miruporon.

If I don't get recognised by that father, I won't be able to marry her.

If I get a splendid bear, her father will accept the marriage.

I had such a plan, so I was looking for an opportunity to hunt a bear.

Recently, maybe because they want to become friendly with Miruporon, other men in the village started asking many things about them.

Of course, I did not provide any information.

If I keep loitering around like this, I'll lose her to someone.

Thus, I have to hunt a bear quickly.

The sky grew dark.

I have to go back home now. My family will start worrying about me.

However, there was a rare tailwind.

I felt as though the forest was cheering for me.

The echoing of the leaves felt different from usual.

There was something.

A little more, I said to myself and proceeded forward.

Then, I could see something flashing from far away.

The two sources of light were like fire.

The figure of the beast got clearer.

It was a white bear.

I had heard the rumours, but I was surprised that it actually exists.

A white bear unlike the ones living on ice, a mystical existence, the master of the forest, or so it was told in the family traditions.

White bear meat makes a house prosper, they said.

If I hunt that white bear, my marriage will be accepted.

The bear seemed to have noticed me as well. It suddenly showed hostility and ran over to me.

I quickly aimed my rifle.

The weak points of a bear are its head, neck, and chest. My opponent was heading here on all fours.

First shot. I aimed for the base of its neck.

The bear dodged the bullet at the last moment.

I quickly ejected the empty cartridge and aimed again.

Four remaining bullets. I have to finish it by then.

The white bear roared as it charged at me.

My fingers trembled from fear.

Second shot.

It hit the leg, but it merely slowed it a little. It was far from a lethal wound.

The bear was approaching fast.

It was a very large one. I could feel sweat pouring out from my body.

If I run away, I will definitely be killed. The only way to survive now is to kill the bear here.

The third bullet hit its head.

However, the bear did not stop moving.

Bears have thick layers of fat. Even if the bullet hits a vital point, it may not stop moving, I recall grandfather Bergholm saying that.

That's why bear hunting is dangerous.

I'm an idiot.

Doing this to marry a woman.

I clenched my eyes and consoled myself.

But then, I suddenly thought of the spider's nest.

—— Like how a spider steadily builds its nest, your efforts will eventually fruition and receive recognition.

When I thought that, I became surprisingly calm.

Nothing frightened me.

When I opened my eyes, the bear was on its hind legs, with one foreleg raised high in the air, revealing its sharp claws.

Its vital point, the chest, was exposed, so my mouth curled up.

I fired off the final two bullets into its chest.

The bear flinched and shook greatly.

The moment I checked the impact of the bullets, I was struck by a great shock.

My vision darkened.



I woke from the sound of someone's voice.

My hand was gripped tightly, that I felt that my fingers hurt a little.

When I opened my eyes, I saw the ceiling of my house.

The person next to me was Miruporon. Her face was in a tragic state, bloated and reddened from sobbing.

Why are you crying? When I said that, she looked very surprised.

Then, she started crying loudly.

I don't get it.

Hearing her loud voice, people came in.

They were my parents and Miruporon's parents.

Mother ran over to me. "Don't go," she said.

No, I'm alive!!

It seems that she thought that I died.

When I asked for the story, it seems like that I was found under a large white bear. I was moved to my home, and I was unconscious for three days.

Miruporon's father found me, apparently.

He properly collected the bear after bringing me here. Indeed, was all I could say.

On the other hand, when I honestly told father that I was at the forest to hunt for a bear, I was hit by father.

He scolded that I was a thankless son.

Both father and mother were crying.

I prostrated on the floor and apologised that I did a foolish thing.

Father told me to do whatever I want, and left the room without saying anything more. Mother said that she was glad that I am alive. Also, she told me to leave father to her.

Father's reaction was the worst, but inside I had a sense of accomplishment.

Though I wouldn't dare to do it again.

Miruporon was sticking close to me, not letting go.

Even though when I squirmed and said that we were in front of our parents, she did not budge.

Miruporon's parents stared at us in silence.

I mustered up my courage and asked for Miruporon's hand in marriage.

The words didn't get through, but father nodded in agreement.

Next to him, her mother was smiling happily.

When I asked Miruporon if they understood, she blushed and said, "Probably."

Like so, our marriage was accepted.

Twelfth year. After many events, I was able to marry Miruporon.

Father coolly allowed the marriage. Mother looked happy too.

Today was a day of celebration.

Father-in-law gave me something in a leather bag.

It was the white bear fur that father-in-law always wore.

He gestured for me to put it on.

I wonder if he wants me to wear it to the banquet.

It was something that was used for a long time, but it had a beautiful shine.

I wondered if it was really alright, but he continued to gesture to put it on, so I received it thankfully.

I attended the banquet while wearing the white bear fur.

When I was guided to the reserved seat, all the attendees had animal masks so I was surprised.

Miruporon was wearing the fur from the white bear I had hunted. It was somewhat embarrassing.

Somewhere, I heard someone jeer, "Yo, white bear couple!"

The one who made fun of us was the lord.

The lord and his wife had grey wolf fur on as a set. Even children had wolf fur.

Just where did everyone get those furs?

I burst into laughter from the strange sight.

Miruporon pointed to her friend.

Aina and her husband had lynx (ilves) fur on. They probably sewed that with other fur. Nice handiwork, I mused in awe.

When I looked next to me, Miruporon looked happy.

That was the happiest day of my life. Such was the memory of that day.



Few years later.

—— The morning of the Rango family begins early.

Every morning, my lovely wife wakes me up..... not.

—— Hii!?

The one who shook me violently to wake me up was my wife's father, Teoporon Ponu Rango.

He's a mysterious man who bears the upper half of his body all year round.

When I opened my eyes, he was holding out his spear, which meant that we should go out hunting.

When I was a newlywed, I screamed many times from my father-in-law standing at the bedside with a weapon.

Few years of marriage made me used to it now.

Father-in-law draped on the bear fur hanging by the entrance. It was made from the fur of a brown bear that he had hunted recently. I put on the fur coat that was hanging next to it.

While I was putting on my boots, father-in-law silently watched me tie the shoelaces with a soft look.

And that father-in-law is barefoot all throughout the year. He never even had frostbites either. Just what kind of body does he have, I wondered.

We went out together, but we headed to separated places.

Father-in-law uses a spear while I hunt with a gun.

It couldn't be helped since our methods are different. The reason is not only that. Father-in-law aims for bears.

It was not just once or twice that I got scared after following him to his hunt. Bears are dangerous, yet father-in-law did not falter a bit and killed them with only a spear.

I went deeper into the snowy forest with a dog.

During the morning, I caught a rabbit and two ptarmigans.

When I returned home, father-in-law had already finished butchering a large boar that he had caught.

I don't have any plans to compete with my superhuman father-in-law.

Even so, it always vexes me.

As I was placing the prey I caught in a container and was moving to the storage for maturation, mother-in-law ran out of the house with great vigour.

"Serious!" she shouted as she grabbed my sleeves and tried to drag me inside.

Mother-in-law did her best to learn the language, but she couldn't improve to the level of my wife. There are many times I don't get what she wants to say.

First, I asked her to calm down and explain what was so serious.

After catching her breath, mother-in-law said, "Baby, about to come."

Upon hearing that, father-in-law immediately let go of his spear and headed inside. I ran towards the doctor.

It was before the consultation hours, but I knocked regardless.

The doctor who peeked out reeked of alcohol already in the morning. It's the worst.

The doctor peeked out while rubbing his eyes. "Wha~t's wrong? Groom of the Poron family," he said.

Who are you calling groom of the Poron family! The family name is Rango!

When I told him the proper family name, he called me Lucaporon this time.

I don't have 'poron' in my name!! But then I realised it was no time to be complaining about such things.

I asked the doctor to come to the house because a child was about to be born.

I also asked the ladies that promised to help with the childbirth.

Thank to my struggle, no, thanks to my wife's efforts, a healthy child was born.

After everyone else was gone, I told her that she did well as words of encouragement.

My wife said "Thank you" to me for some reason.

When I asked why she was thanking me, she replied that it was because she was so happy. I got an inexplicable feeling and grasped my wife's hands.

My younger self could not have imagined that Miruporon and I would be celebrating childbrith as a couple while holding hands.

—— Thank you Miruporon. I'm happy too.

It was the moment where I was finally being honest.



The next day, father-in-law was asking the lord for a favour.

He requested the lord to name the newborn child.

The lord asked me in secret.

“Hey, Luca. Are you fine with me deciding it?” he said. I told him that I didn’t mind if father-in-law said that.

Why do we men have to be whispering in secret, I replied as I pushed away the monster lord who was still looking young.

The monster lord asked, “Would you like something-poron after all?”

Don’t ask me!! Think normally!!

Later, the lord bestowed the name of Mishka to our newborn child.

It means cub in a foreign language, apparently.

My family was happy, saying that it was a good name.

Personally, I was happy that it didn’t have –poron in it.

Chapter 98 - Ritzhard Getting Called Out by Women.

Today I was going out.

However, my feet were heavy.

Because I was going out to meet beautiful women.

Furthermore, I felt guilty for hiding it from Sieg.

I still had time before I had to go, so I spent some time with my wife.

“So you are to meet with your friends today?”

“Ah, yes.”

I unconsciously averted my gaze from Sieg and stared up at the ceiling.

“Ritz.”

“Yes?”

“Really?”

“T-Truly!”

I was trying to behave as natural as possible, but my voice shook from Sieg’s questions.

The other party asked me to keep this affair an absolute secret.

“.....Today,”

“Yes.”

“You’re looking more handsome than usual?”

“Since I didn’t have the opportunity to wear the clothes grandfather gifted to me.”

“.....”

If one is dressing nicer than usual, it does raise suspicions.

Sieg’s sharp gaze pierced me like a dagger.

I started feeling restless, so I stood up from the chair and headed for the window.

I took out a pocket watch from my pocket and opened it.

There was still some time until the departure time. I have to wait in this room for a while.

The sky was clear today. There was not a speck of cloud on the clear blue sky.

Nice weather, when I murmured that with a hand on the window sill, my body was suddenly pushed from behind. My forehead banged into the glass window.

“—— Uwa!”

“.....”

It seems like Sieg approached while erasing her presence and silencing her footsteps. I didn’t notice at all.

And then she suppressed me from behind.

She tightly twisted my arm to my neck and another hand was tightly grasping my wrist, which was being held at my back.

Since the key points were properly pressed and her weight was on me, I could not move at all. She is indeed from the military. She’s used to restraining people.

“S-Sieglinde-san, what might it be?”

The baby inside will be surprised, so I said to calm her in a roundabout way.

However, Sieg did not reply.

When I calmed down and felt it again, her belly was not pressed against me. I sighed in relief that so stress was going to the baby.

Usually, I would be excited if we were making body contact like this, but figuratively speaking, this is 'the arresting of a suspect acting strangely'. Not a pleasing position at all.

"Sieg-san, I, have to go now."

I have to buy flowers or something to gain the favour of the other party.

Even if I went out early, I can easily kill time in the city.

"I-I'll be returning home, as soon as possible, so,"

".....Sister-in-law told me, that,"

"Yes?"

She spoke out in a frightening voice so I got chills all over my body.

Just what might it be, when I asked that, she said something absurd.

"That half of the men have affairs during their wives' pregnancies."

"!?"

That, where's the information from!? Where's the investigation from!? I ended up shouting that.

Indeed, I am going out to meet a beautiful woman, but I'm not having an affair. Even if I told her that clearly, Sieg's grip did not loosen.

I told her that she was the best in the world, but her grip only strengthened.

It hurt a bit, so I ended up yelping, "Hie!" At that moment, the hold loosened.

"....."

“.....”

Was there ever a moment in my life where I was afraid of turning around?

While I was frozen up, she called my name in a low voice so I turned around.

After seeing her face, I shouted, “Hie!” once more.

Sieg was in tears. Her eyes were brimming with tears, that even a blink would cause them to flood out.

Such a frail expression, I never saw it before.

I felt a shock as though I was smashed in the back of my head.

“I-I’m sorry!”

I apologised properly in a loud voice and prostrated on the floor, letting my forehead touch the floor.

Then, I explained the details about the person I am meeting today as well as how that came to be.



I talked after we regained composure and sat down side by side.

The person I am meeting today is Sieg’s cousin, Hildegard von Hertling.

The other day, her marriage was decided.

A few days ago, a letter arrived from her. She asked me to meet her and let her complain.

“Sorry. I thought that it would be nice if your cousin saw me as a well-to-do person, so I was more focused on dressing up than usual.”

“.....So that was why.”

In addition, she told me to not tell Sieg. She was bothered that she might be disliked by Sieg if she said that.

Sieg stopped moving while staring at the ground.

I don't know what I should do in these situations.

I could only feel sorry.

As we were doing that, it was time for me to go out. However, I agonised whether it was alright for me to go out now.

Just in case, I stopped by once more.

“Er~m, Sieg-san, I have to go now.”

“I'll go too.”

“Eh!?”

“Where are you meeting her?”

“Ah, well.....”

“Where?”

“Th-The town café.”

Surprisingly, Sieg said, “my cousin is beautiful so I don't want to let you meet her alone.”

Even though I told her that she is an unmarried woman accompanied by a maid, she did not let go of my hand.

It's probably just me getting verbally bashed up by her cousin.

I don't have a shred of worry.

Rather, if Sieg comes along, the other party will be returning home still frustrated.

So it would be good for Sieg to wait at home.

"Sieg."

"....."

When I said that I will return soon while caressing her hand, she let my hand go.

Since it felt bad to just leave like this, I approached her to give her a goodbye kiss.

Before my lips could touch her cheek, the docile Sieg brushed me away.

I was shocked that I was still hated even though I was being considerate, but she wasn't outright rejecting me.

The moment I whispered words of love into her ear, her cheeks were dyed red. Sieg with her eyes tightly closed is the cutest. I kissed her lips.

I went out even as I felt sad. The footsteps were heavy after all.

The cousin was already at the designated café.

She was an attractive beauty, so I could tell from far away. She had three maids accompanying her.

"Ah, hello~ Good afternoon."

I trotted into the store and quickly greeted the cousin while taking off my hat.

I wanted to meet you, when I said that in a frail voice, she glared at me.

“Sit down.”

“Yes, thank you.”

I sat down while smiling slightly.

I ordered fruit juice from the waiter who came to receive the order. Then, “You’re ordering that when you’re a gentleman,” she said in a denouncing tone.

What is a gentleman’s drink, I pondered seriously.

The gaze from the front was not the only gaze piercing me.

From above, the gazes of the three maids standing behind the cousin were headed at me. Could it be, that they are also ladies admiring Sieg-sama. It was a little scary, so I couldn’t confirm.

I quenched the thirst from the fruit juice the waiter brought, and then moved onto the main topic.

“So, what might you want?”

“I heard that Sieglinde-oneesama became pregnant. Is that true?”

“Ah, erm, yes, fortunately.”

Sieg, she gets called oneesama. Unexpected. I also felt like calling her ‘oneesama’.

From imagining her playing with her cousin, I felt much more relaxed.

Maybe because I was grinning too much, she got angry. All I could do was to apologise.

“I cannot forgive you……!”

I felt a fear I never felt before from the beauty trembling in fury.

I lowered my head that my forehead almost hit the table, and waited for her to calm down.

“What part of oneesama did you come to like?”

“!”

“Don’t you dare say that you just liked her appearance.”

Of course, I fell in love at first sight.

The moment I saw Sieg, “She’s the one. I found her!” was the thought I got, and my body moved naturally.

Would that mean I proposed to her because I liked her appearance? I’m not sure.

However, I can say for sure.

“I..... I love everything about Sieg.”

I revealed all of my heart, which I did not even show to her, to the cousin.

I got embarrassed in the middle, that I ended up stammering a bit, but I could get it through.

“.....and that’s how it is.”

“.....”

The cousin had her fan open, covering half of her face, so I couldn’t tell her expression.

However, I didn’t feel the piercing glares anymore, so does that mean I am forgiven?

“Ah, erm, other than that, any other questions?”

“.....ries.”

“Pardon?”

“Let me hear stories about oneesama.”

“!”

She told me that she wanted to know how Sieg has been doing recently.

I gladly recounted how she was in the remote land.

How Sieg captivated the women of the village, how she greeted Emmerich with a roundhouse kick, how she stopped a rampaging reindeer, how she shot an elk that was far away with great gun skills, I told her such stories.

The cousin listened with a gleeful expression.

“That’s nice. Oneesama found a relaxed life in a foreign land without having to restrain herself.”

She told me,

Sieg would not be able to be a nobleman’s wife since she did not receive any education as a lady.

Even if she was doing well, the cousin was worried that Sieg would have been holding it in every day.

“I had definitely thought that she was living a hard life in a foreign land..... However, that was my mistake.”

All along, she was afraid of meeting Sieg, she murmured.

Apparently she was worried that Sieg would have withered away in the harsh environment of living in a foreign country.

In addition, she pestered her father to learn how Sieg came to marry. She was worried that Sieg might have got herself into an unwanted marriage because of her.

The cousin smiled after hearing how Sieg was living. I also felt relieved, too.

After that, I listened to Sieg's exploits during her years of military service, that we lost track of time. In the end, we were just worried about the person we liked.

I came to when the sun started setting.

"Uwa!"

"What might it be?"

"Well, truth be told....."

I confessed that I was caught red-handed by Sieg right before I came.

"My, that's some big trouble!"

After saying that, the cousin Hildegard-san followed me to the house.

Upon seeing Sieg's face, she started crying.

She said that she did not have the courage to go meet her in a trembling voice.

Also, she apologised for today.

Sieg gently embraced Hildegard-san and patted her head. I felt moved by the sisterly love.

After the storm passed, I apologised to Sieg once more.

"Sieg, erm, I'm sorry."

"No, I got what's going on."

".....Yes."

Sieg also said that she was sorry for suspecting me.

“Hildegard is a beauty, so,”

She was uneasy that I would be distracted.

I brushed up her alluring red hair on her cheek and whispered into her ear.

“.....No other women than Sieg comes into my sight though.”

I continually stared at Sieg looking downwards in embarrassment.

Like so, I was able to safely survive the problem of Sieg and her cousin.

Also, this was a story of the day when I resolved to never make Sieg cry again.

Chapter 99 - Emmerich's Newlywed Diary, with Cabbage and Bacon Soup

A long time after living in the countryside, Ritz-kun contacted me that the buzz was dying down, so I thought to return Aina-chan to the village.

Of course, I will be moving with her.

I was preparing to leave for village, but then a problem occurred.

It was about the goat we were raising.

The goat can't be taken by boat, and it won't be able to survive the winter cold, so it was returned to uncle.

Uncle was planning on eating the goat at the farewell feast, but I felt sad for it so I asked him to not do that.

That goat kicked me many times, but I was seeing it every day so I became fond of it.

It was healthy and the body was well built so it would be delicious, or so uncle said, but seeing me teary-eyed he gave up on eating it.

Rather, that's a milking goat, so it won't be that delicious!? I thought.

Not that I know a lot about the meat of livestock.

Aina-chan, aren't you glad, when I said that, she replied, "About what?"

I told her that the goat we were raising will be kept alive, but she said, "Livestock are for eating." Apparently, in her village, they raise livestock from spring to autumn when there's no snow, and then eat the livestock in winter.

Since she was diligently taking care of it every day, I had definitely thought that she liked it.

Indeed, they are a hunting people, I concluded in admiration.

Well, anyhow, I asked him to continue raise the goat for milking.

For the goods in the house, we solved it by either giving away or throwing away most of things.

I did not worry about costs of living.

There's the house that Ritz-kun promised for us, and Aina-chan said that she would be making the traditional clothing. Sieglinde will be teaching me how to hunt. It was a thankful story.

We packed our luggage in one bag for each of us.

There were many gifts.

The night before we left, I sat down next to her who was sitting on the rug.

It was something I bought some time ago when I went on a business trip.

"A-Aina-chan."

"What?"

Maybe because she was in the middle of sewing, the tone of her voice was prickly.

I kept speaking without backing down.

"This, erm, if you don't mind."

She stared at the square box with a puzzled face.

"What is it? Chocolate again?"

"No, there wasn't any chocolate, this time"

Every time I went out to the city for work, I didn't know what to get her so I always chose the easy option of chocolate.

She always received them gladly, so I kept gifting her chocolate, so I thought that she would gladly receive them again.

In retrospect, I should have bought other gifts as well.

Even if she was happy the first, I shouldn't have kept bringing the same gift every time like an idiot.

Well, that's fine now.

Aina-chan received the gift with a wary look.

To be this suspicious of me, I'm not being trusted.

However, Aina-chan's frown was also great so I did not care.

I want to forever stare at how she unravels the ribbon cautiously.

When she opened the box, her eyes opened wide. My gift was a brooch.

Some time ago, I heard from Ritz-kun, "The best present for the villagers are silver brooches," so I decided on that as a gift.

To be honest, I wanted to give her a marriage ring, but over there they don't have the tradition of giving rings and it would get in the way of work, so I decided against that. There's also the reason that I didn't have enough money for that.

Aina-chan looked at me in surprise.

Maybe because she was surprised, her cheek slowly dyed red. It was lovely.

"This is for me?"

When I nodded in confirmation, she softly held the brooch in her hand.

"P-Pretty."

It seems like she likes it.

I bought a brooch in the shape of a cat from a jeweler. The curled tail was similar to Rossa.

Aina-chan showed the cat that was next to her the brooch with a glint in her eyes.

“Hey, look, Rossa, it’s like you! It’s very cute!”

That smile, I wished that was not meant for Rossa, but for me.

No, that’s asking for too much.

Her liking the present is reward enough.

When I was about to stand up, Aina-chan tugged at my sleeve.

I ended up looking at her in surprise.

Unexpected words came out of her mouth.

“Th-Thank you.”

”!”

While holding Rossa in one hand, Aina-chan thanked me with a shy expression and her eyes upturned.

Really, she’s too cute, too cute, et cetera.

Like so, our last night before moving passed in this way.



Aina-chan and I returned to Ritz-kun’s village. Ah, along with the cat Rossa.

When we arrived at the port, her mother was waiting for us.

The mother and daughter hugged each other, rejoicing at their reunion.

“David-san, thank you so much!”

I felt sorry because she was thanking me.

I had put her through hardships because I did not earn a lot.

In the countryside, she served mushrooms from the forest and fish from the rivers to me.

Every day was fun, and her cooking was all delicious. For making me happy, I should be the one thanking you, I said as I bowed deeply.

The thanking battle between her mother and me continued until Rossa sneezed in the cage.

We reunited with the lord and the lady in front of the village fort.

Even though I say that, I did see them over there, but it had been a while since I saw them in traditional clothes so it felt as though I had not met them for a long time.

“Emmerich, you did well to come here! Aina-chan, welcome back!”

It was exciting to be welcomed in. I’m sure Aina-chan thought the same.

Seeing the two in good health, I felt relieved.

As for Sieglinde, maybe because she had given birth to a child, her expression had softened greatly.

For reference, their son is being taken care of by Ritz’s mother at their house.

I’m looking forward to meeting his mother who is rumoured to be exactly like Ritz-kun.

I parted from the two of them and headed to Aina-chan’s place.

I was worried about the scary grandfather, but Aina-chan reassured me that it was alright.

I soon understood the meaning of those words.

Aina-chan's grandfather was completely dispirited.

The moment he saw his granddaughter, he started shedding large drops of tears.

Grandfather said that he reflected on the actions.

Afterwards, our marriage was coolly accepted.



Morning.

I woke from Rossa kneading my belly.

When I opened my eyes thinly, it was still dark outside.

When I asked to have more sleep, the kneading got stronger.

“Uu, sorry Rossa-san, a little more.....”

“It's not Rossa!”

“!”

I jolted up in surprise.

I thought that it was definitely Rossa treading on my belly asking for food, but it was not the cat but Ainya-chan, I mean Aina-chan.

What do you want me to do? When I asked that, she asked me to go outside and dig out vegetables from the snow.

“I'm busy baking.”

“U-Understood.”

She said that the vegetable was for breakfast, so I hurried.

If the vegetables planted in the garden are left after the first snow piles up, they get buried in the snow.

It's a natural refrigerator of sorts.

Furthermore, these 'snow vegetables' are sweet and delicious.

According to Ritz-kun, the substances in the water of the vegetables change into a sweet substance to not freeze under the snow. Indeed, a son of a scholar. He knows everything.

I went outside and slowly dug the snow out from the area near the vegetables with a scoop.

If a twig is found, it means that a vegetable is nearby. I changed the tool to a short one dug cautiously to not harm the vegetable.

There's no telling where it might be. It was like hunting for treasure.

Today I dug out cabbages.

When I returned home, the aromatic smell of baking bread had filled the room. I immediately felt happy.

The cabbage I handed over was quickly cooked.

Aina-chan brewed hot coffee. While drinking that, I watched her cook.

The whole cabbage is put in a large pot and then boiled in hot water for a while.

She then cut out thick pieces of bacon from the wild boar that was hung up.

The cabbage was then taken out of the hot water and then slits were made in a cross shape. In between the leaves, bacon was filled in. To make sure the form does not crumble, the cabbage was tightened with a string. After that, it was put in a stock that was prepared beforehand.

After the cabbage is boiled enough, it's done by seasoning it lightly with spices and salt.

The cabbage is taken out again, and then split into four parts.

A quarter of the cabbage was placed in my bowl. One quarter was also placed in Aina-chan's bowl. Afterwards, a clear amber-coloured soup was poured in the bowl.

The rest of the cabbage and the bacon was put back into the pot. It seems like she will be taking them to her family later.

Freshly baked bread and soft cabbage soup.

It was a feast from the morning.

I prayed to the Spirit and then started eating.

When the rye bread was split into two, white steam rose from it.

I couldn't wait until I split into a bite-size and bit into the bread. The outside was crispy and the inside was soft. I could feel the luxurious texture limited only to fresh bread.

As for the fist-sized cabbage, I sliced it with a knife.

Even without having to put in much strength, the knife went through easily. The knife encountered a piece of bacon in the middle, so I sliced quickly.

First, I used a spoon to have only the cabbage.

The cabbage was soft and unbelievably sweet. The bacon had a proper chewing texture and a savoury flavour. When I had them both at the same time, an indescribable flavour pleased the tongue.

When I came to, I noticed that Aina-chan had not yet touched her meal.

I ate on my own.

Even as I panicked, I gave her my impression to smooth it over.

"Aina-chan, it's very delicious."

"Ah, I see." I thought that would have been the cold reply, but Aina-chan smiled slightly and murmured, "I'm glad."

—— Uwa, Aina-chan's super cute (the rest is omitted)

Like so, our newlywed life continued.

Every day made me think that I was in paradise.

Chapter 100 - Luca's Pleasant Picnic

Today, mother-in-law said that the whole family should go out on a picnic to the mountain.

I had thought that we would spending the morning slowly since the whole family was on holiday, but yet again father-in-law was at my bedside, inviting me to a hunt.

.....Like I said, from summer to early autumn, hunting is prohibited.

Even though I said that, father-in-law did not understand.

However, it seemed like he does know that hunting is prohibited in this period.

So, we are going out to the forest for 'bear hunting' which is allowed all year round. Jokes aside, we focus our efforts on gathering mushrooms in the morning.

Father-in-law hunts at least one bear a week. Not only that, he also catches large amounts of fish every day. In addition, he catches them diving. I recall him complaining even though we caught a lot because he did not catch a big one.

However, it was still too much for us, so we had to share remainders to our neighbours.

While I was collecting mushrooms with dew on them, father-in-law brought back a beehive.

The honeybees were nowhere to be seen. The way how he has a large beehive resembles a bear.

.....Rather, what is he fighting so early in the morning.

Mother-in-law who was coming out to greet us was pleased at our harvest.

"My, bee honey, happy."

"....."

As ever, mother-in-law's language skills are not great. Well, she's much better than father-in-law who rarely speaks.

However, I learned that it's rather easy to tell what father-in-law is thinking.

After seeing mother-in-law's reaction, the corner of his lips curled up ever so slightly.

Strangers won't notice the change in his expression. I also didn't know in the beginning.

However, as I spent every day with him, I became able to read the emotions through his expressions.

Well, there's are still things that I can't read from my wife's father though.

"Luca, welcome back."

"Aa."

Miruporon, who was having breakfast, peeked out.

She stuck to me so early in the morning so I pushed her away. I wonder if she's not embarrassed even with her parents nearby.

"Mum and dad are always close though?"

"Come to think of it, you are right!"

Father-in-law and mother-in-law are very chummy.

They're not flirting with each other, but they are always together when inside the house.

How envious.

When there are others around, I can't seem to calm down, that I take actions like the previous one. In addition to that, I didn't want to do that while it was still bright outside.

"Okay. I'll endure until nighttime."

“!”

Miruporon said that with downcast eyes.

Why does she have to be so cute from the morning?

I looked at my father-in-law's rough face to calm down.

Breakfast is fried bread and bear soup.

It was not the cuisine of this region but cuisine of their homeland.

Fried bread is flat like a dish. The outside is crispy, while the inside is chewy. It has just enough savoury flavour, and it went well with meat.

The bear soup was red. It had tomato in it, but that was not all.

The soup has a spice called 'chili' which has a strong spicy flavour.

The first time I had it, I was very surprised. It was so spicy that I had tears coming out.

However, the taste grows on one.

Mother-in-law brought chili from overseas. She plants them in summer and harvests them in early autumn.

Because they receive too much sunlight during the white nights, they are much spicier than the usual variants.

Incredible, white nights.

The fried bread went well with the spicy soup. The bear meat inside was amazingly soft and delicious.

When I had almost finished eating, there was a lot of sweat on my forehead. Miruporon wiped them away as if it was natural to do so.

After resting my stomach a little, I prepared to go out.

Because I had sweated, I changed my clothes.

While I was struggling to tie my hair, Miruporon came over with a comb while saying that she wanted to do it.

“You, braid it properly.”

“But, fluffy, braids are, definitely cuter!”

“What are you saying, are you stupid!”

I told her that she can't, but in the end my braids were looser than usual.

Moreover, the bangs that I usually brushed back had been arbitrarily lowered, with a decoration to tie them.

“Look, it's pretty after all!”

“.....”

Since I had to please my family sometimes, I endured it today.

Miruporon was wearing the high exposure foreign clothes with a Sámi women's shawl and a silver brooch on the chest.

Also, she had a feather of a different colour than usual.

Father-in-law and mother-in-law seemed to be ready as well. Father-in-law was half-naked and crossing his arms. As for mother-in-law, she was dressed in the same way as Miruporon, wearing a shawl over her traditional clothing.

Seeing me all dressed up, mother-in-law's eyes gleamed.

“Luca! Cute, cute, you look good. How nice.”

What do you mean cute cute!? Even father-in-law's smiling subtly as well!

“Oi, don't you need to make father-in-law cute as well?”

“Dad, mum made him cute already.”

“.....”

I was planning on giving him the same look, but it seems that father-in-law was made cute already.

I checked, but it was the usual flawless, half-naked father-in-law.

.....These people, aren't they mistaking the meaning of cute?

Both the parents and the child were staring at me, so I said that we should get going soon.



I had thought that a picnic was something people did to take relaxing strolls while enjoying nature.

“.....You're walking too fast! Are we training or what!?”

With father-in-law at the lead, we started climbing a mountain.

Moreover, they left me behind.

They had unbelievable leg strength. I followed them while getting drenched in sweat.

The mountain peak.

“Why did we come to mountain!! Usually, picnics are just, going to the lakeside or the riverside, those kinds of places!”

I shouted as I flung down a stick I found on the way up.

My voice echoed back here so I felt even emptier.

They were not tired at all. Just what sort of body structure do they have?

Miruporon talked to me happily.

“Mountaintop, scenery, pretty.”

“Ha!? I can only see forests, forests, forests, forests, lakes and more forests!”

“Village, also see.”

“So what!”

I was out of breath after talking with Miruporon, so I collapsed on the spot.

“Luca, meal, lunch.”

“.....”

She tugged my arm, so I decided to head to the spot where father-in-law and mother-in-law were sitting.

As for lunch, mother-in-law prepared it with great vigour from the morning.

Four lunchboxes were laid on the quilt.

“Luca, eat lots.”

“.....Yeah.”

Mother-in-law served food onto the plate.

Lunch was bear meat and fried vegetables wrapped in a baked bread of cornstarch in water, bear meat skewers, braised beans and bear meat, bear meatballs. A splendid meal of bear meat.

However, having cooked for the count for many years, mother-in-law's cooking was great.

My body was tired, but the food kept going in well.

After that, I spent time staring at empty space. I wonder if father-in-law went somewhere to relieve himself. I couldn't see him for a while now.

Even so, he's taking some time.

“——Haaaaaa!?”

From the unexpected turn of event, even Miruporon and mother-in-law were surprised.

Father-in-law came back while hauling a bear.

Apparently, he strangled it to death because it attacked while he was relieving himself.

“Nonono, impossible!!”

I shouted that, but indeed, father-in-law was had a bear on his back.

Rather, is he planning to descend the mountain with a bear on his back? I couldn't ask because I was frightened.

Father-in-law easily descended the mountain while bearing a bear. Afterwards, he even had enough energy left to butcher the bear.

I followed him to the slaughterhouse to help him, but when I sat down for a short break, I couldn't stand up again. I ended up staring at father-in-law with a vacant expression as he worked.

Above was how the Rango family spent the holiday.

Rather, the body didn't rest at all! I ended up retorting that.

Chapter 101 - Story of One Summer Day — First Half

After Arno was born, grandfather came over to Sieg's place every time he could.

He even buys large amounts of toys as a present every time.

I do appreciate that he's buying mostly animal dolls, but seeing the mountain of stuffed toys I can't help but tilt my head in wonder of who is making those.

I was thinking of asking father to make the ones we will be using at our home, but then I remembered that his handiwork was bad so I decided against that. Mother is more skilled than father, but I felt sorry about asking her so it would become my work.

Well, it's too early to worry about making stuffed toys for Arno though.

Anyhow, grandfather came.

When I went to the front door after hearing the news, he was just entering while holding a large teddy bear.

"Grandfather, that is.....?"

"It's not for you."

"Well, I knew that already though."

I heard someone running over here from afar.

Shouting something.

"They're here."

Grandfather grinned. And then he crouched down on the spot.

"Grandfather Lüneburg ~ ~!!"

“.....Aru, wait, running’s, dangerous.”

It was the nieces. They came running, with Edelgard stopping nearby and Adeltraud hugging grandfather.

I wonder when they became so close.

I was surprised to learn that grandfather liked children.

Grandfather has a scary look so children of House Lüneberg are scared of him.

However, Adeltraud didn’t seem to mind, as she was talking to him with a smile on her face.

Edelgard didn’t seem to be used to it yet, since she was only glancing at grandfather’s face.

For now, I went up next to her and said, “He’s a kind grandfather, so why don’t you play with him?”

Grandfather handed the teddy bear to Adeltraud and then beckoned Edelgard, who was fidgeting a little ways away.

He always came late and left without staying, but today he will be spending a night here.

“It seems like I made it before the girls went off to sleep.”

“It is still rather late though.”

The time was past nine.

Since the nieces heard that grandfather would be coming, they were waiting earnest.

Let’s play tomorrow, or so they even made such a cute promise. Having received the teddy bear, the sisters were led away by a servant.

“Where’s Sieglinde-san and Arno?”

“They’re getting up, probably.”

“I see.”

He bought a parasol as a gift for Sieg. The deep blue parasol and embroidered with a black lace on the edge. It's one that has a rather alluring, or mature design.

From I imagining Sieg using this parasol, I ended up smirking a little. Grandfather was also saying, "Wouldn't it be nice?"

"This is for you."

"Nn?"

Apparently he had a gift for me as well.

I was given a heavy and large box from the servant. What could this be?

"Grandfather, what is this?"

"Well, open it up in your room."

"?"

When I returned to my room, Arno had just finished a meal.

His belly was chubby, having had a lot of milk.

Grandfather received Arno from Sieg, and was making a smile as if he was melting.

If people of House Lüneberg saw this sight, they would be surprised.

I felt moved from seeing that sight for some reason.

Grandfather had been overburdened with parenting. I'm glad that he's this delighted with children.

"Ritz, that is?"

"Ah, I wonder?"

I remembered that I was holding up a box.

“Grandfather, if it’s alright, please take a seat.”

“I’m putting Arno to sleep, so later.”

“Ah, thank you.”

Grandfather put in a lot of effort and energy into making Arno sleep. rocking his body. Arno quickly went to sleep in the cradle while letting out a “My.”

He was looking at Arno’s sleeping face, but a servant brought tea so he came over here and sat down on a chair.

“What, you didn’t open it yet?”

“Yes.”

“Open it up.”

Grandfather’s gift was placed on the table.

I opened it as my heart pounded in excitement.

“.....Nn?”

There was something like a metal pail in the wooden box. There was a tightly shutting lid for it. On its side, there were handles. It had a mysterious structure.

“What do you think it is?”

“Hmm, a metal pail!”

“Think more before you answer!”

.....No, well, I can only see it as a metal pail.

Grandfather asked the same thing to Sieg.

“Might this be for making something?”

“Yes.”

“Grandfather, a hint please.”

“For something cold.”

“Ice-maker?”

“Close!”

“Could it be for ice cream?”

“Indeed!”

“Hehh, so there’s something like that.”

When I opened the lid, it was double-layered inside.

Ice is to be put in the outer layer, and then the ingredients are to be put in the inner layer. After that, the lid is to be closed then the handle is turned to make ice cream.

“You can take it back to the village and set up a store.”

“Ah, that is a nice idea.”

Selling berry-flavoured ice cream to tourists and raking in money. That might be nice.

“Huh, wait, what is the ingredient for ice cream.....?”

“We need dairy so the costs will be high.”

“Uu!”

My dream was crushed from Sieg pointing that out.

We don't have cattle nearby, so milk is an expensive product because of the transport fees. Reindeers can only be milked in early spring, and we need to make cheese, so there won't be enough left to make ice cream. I went limp.

"Ritzhard, could you have never had ice cream before?"

"Ah, come to think of it!"

After grandfather pointed it out, I realised that I never had ice cream.

There are many ice cream stores in the cities, but unfortunately there are none in the remote land. Stalls sometimes set up in the port, up only kids have them.

"Sieg, have you had them?"

"Well, a few times."

Apparently there is a famous ice cream store in the city.

"It's a famous dating place for young people."

"!?"

I ended up complaining to Sieg, asking with whom she went there.

"No, I just went there with my cousins....."

"Then it's alright!"

I felt relieved that she didn't go with her colleagues or something.

To me who was acting like that, Grandfather put in an attack.

"Though you were playing with women every time you were coming here."

“Erm, grandfather, those stories.....”

What is he saying, now, at this moment.

Of course, that’s before I married.

No, well, I reported to Sieg about those things, so it should be alright..... not!!

Sieg was sending a sharp glare over here.

Even when I said, “Sieg is the prettiest woman in the world now,” with a trembling voice, she merely narrowed her eyes at me.

I was playing around freely, yet to be worried about Sieg’s relationships, how hypocritical. For now, I apologised earnestly and told her that we should talk about it later.

I might be hit using the parasol with the alluring design, but I vowed in my head to endure it.

“Now, why don’t we rest?”

“!”

I was surprised at grandfather withdrawing early.

.....How cruel. Dropping a bomb and disappearing.

“Grandfather-in-law, thank you for the lovely gift.”

“It will be good.”

“Grandfather, thank you for the ice cream maker as well.”

“Make some tomorrow.”

“Yes.”

Tomorrow's schedule was decided.

The problem is what happens afterwards.

Sieg was tapping the parasol she got from grandfather against her palm.

From the movements that were as though she was checking the durability, beads of sweat formed on my brows.

"Erm, Sieglinde-san?"

"What is it?"

"What should I do for you to forgive me?"

"Why do you ask?"

"No, well, you look a little angry~"

I mustered up courage and asked, but Sieg-san replied that she was not angry.

But her movements were quite scary?

I said that I will do anything and then lowered my head.

"Well, if there's something I want to do,"

"Yes."

"I want to ride a boat on a lake, so won't you row with me?"

"Pardon?"

"I received a splendid parasol after all."

"!"

I was surprised at the sudden date proposal.

Also, my heart pounded from Sieg's embarrassed expression.

When I asked why she was swinging the parasol around like that, she replied that she was doing so because she was pondering about inviting me.

I felt relieved that she wasn't angry.

Tonight, yet again, I was thankful at Sieg's magnanimity.

Chapter 102 - Story of One Summer Day — Second Half

When I woke up, my wife had already got up. This happens because she's an early riser. Maybe because she was out for a stroll, my son's cradle was empty as well, which caused my shoulders to go limp. I touched the blanket, but not even the warmth was there. Very sad.

At my bed-sides, the clothes for today were hung up.

Shirt, tie, vest, trousers and belt. Sieg picked them out every day. While thinking, the way she does these things without saying a thing is the cutest, I changed into them.

I brushed my teeth, washed my face and also shaved my beard while I was at it. I combed my hair and properly braided it as well.

When I finished tidying up, I headed to the dining room for breakfast.

Father-in-law was at the dining hall. It seems like he was working at the ranch again. I help in the morning only about once or twice a week. I want to help more, but unfortunately I am weak to mornings.

Father-in-law goes out to the ranch every day early in the morning, so I admire him for being a diligent worker.

"Father-in-law, good morning."

"Morning."

He greeted me with a smile again today.

He is dependable and he loves his family. He's completely different from a prodigal father somewhere.

Really, he is the epitome of an ideal father. I became envious of Sieg.

When I told him that, father-in-law told me a splendid thing.

"Ritzhard-kun is also a proud son of mine."

“F-Father-in-law!”

I’m so happy I want to hug father-in-law! Or so I thought, but I stopped myself because he might not be used to it.

While we were smiling at each other, grandfather arrived at the dining room. He had Arno in his arms. Sieg followed in shortly after.

“What, there are two suspicious people grinning at each other.”

He called our delightful father-son time suspicious. How cruel.

Arno was left to a servant and placed at a cradle at the edge of the dining room.

It seems like the three of them were out on a stroll. Grandfather boasted it proudly.

As we talked, the topic shifted to the ranch. Then I remembered something.

“Ah, come to think of it, father-in-law, can I have some milk?”

“I don’t mind, but what are using it for?”

“I’m planning on making ice-cream today.”

When I told him the story, father-in-law gladly agreed to help.

Other than that, you’ll probably need eggs and cream, he said and promised fresh ingredients from the ranch.

“Would it be alright for Edelgard and Adeltraud to make it with us?”

“Yeah, I suppose there won’t be any problems as long as you don’t give them too much.”

“Thank you.”

Some time ago, I heard of parents who don't want to give ice cream to their children, so I was a little worried.

"As I thought, would it cause stomachaches?"

"Ritzhard, that's not the case."

"Nn?"

According to grandfather, ice cream stores use diluted milk and a lot of artificial colouring, and some stores even have harmful substances, so that was why he didn't want to give them ice cream. This time, we're using milk from the ranch, so there won't be any problems.

Grandfather was well-knowledgeable about the ice cream stores in the city.

Soon afterwards, the nieces, their mother and mother-in-law came in. My brothers-in-law had already headed to work so they're absent.

It was time for breakfast with all the family present.

After the meal, I asked my brother-in-law's wife for permission to make ice cream with the sisters.

Surprisingly, the nieces who were originally city kids never had ice cream.

One reason was because they were sickly.

From hearing about the sudden event of making ice cream, Adeltraud jumped up and down in joy, and Edelgard blushed happily.

"Dearest mother always said that only princesses can have ice cream."

Edelgard nodded at that as well.

Today you can specially have it, when I told them that they looked joyful.

What lovely princesses, I thought as I felt like hugging them.

After I showed them the ice cream maker, the glint in their eyes brightened even more.

When I told them grandfather brought it, they looked at him with admiration.

“This a magic passed down through fairies.”

“Uwaa, amazing.”

“!”

“.....”

Grandfather said something irresponsible again.

It seems like father had been talking about fairies with the sisters.

When I looked towards Sieg for help, she also was smiling awkwardly.

Since there was no reason to destroy the young sisters’ dreams, I accepted it without saying a word.

As for the measurements, the patissier will help so there won’t be any mistakes.

“Now then, let’s begin!”

“Yay~”

“.....Yes.”

For making ice cream, we headed to the dining room where there was a wide table.

Grandfather brought over a reading chair and had Arno on his lap. Today his role seems to be a supervisor.

The ingredients are milk, eggs, cream, sugar, vanilla, ice and salt.

First, we sliced open the vanilla beans and took the husks off.

“Dearest uncle, what are these?”

“These are dried vanilla beans. The sweets smell nice when you put them in.”

“Hehh~”

The pod-shaped fruit is a spice that gives off a sweet scent. The vanilla essences sold in stores are synthesised fragrance made from putting vanilla beans in alcohol, or so the cook said.

Vanilla will be used as is, so the resulting ice cream will be an extravagant product where one can fully enjoy the original taste.

The milk was put in, and then vanilla was put in. The fire was put out before it started boiling.

“Did you measure the sugar?”

When I asked the sisters, the sugar was properly prepared.

Since they were free, they were watching Sieg split the egg yolks and whites.

As for the egg whites, I thought of making langue de chat with it, so I asked a nearby servant to take it to the kitchen.

First the egg yolks were whisked properly and then sugar was put in.

Once the rough texture was gone, vanilla was added in.

Next, in the bowl of sugar, egg yolks and vanilla, the milk from before is poured in then stirred.

To make the texture on the tongue feel better, it was filtered through cloth and poured into a pot, after which it was heated with weak flames. If it's heated too much, lumps form so we have to be careful.

After a while, the fire is put out then the contents are moved into a bowl. The bowl is placed in ice water to cool it.

“This mixture of milk, sugar, egg yolks and vanilla is called ‘crème anglaise.’”⁵

⁵ Crème anglaise (French for “English sauce”) is a light pouring custard used as dessert cream or sauce. (Source: Wikipedia)

It means sauce from a foreign country.

Apparently this sauce comes from a certain country so it's named after that the country.

The ingredients are the same as custard, but there's no flour in this so this one is in liquid form.

While the crème anglaise was being cooled, cream and sugar were whisked in a bowl. Once it became sticky, I stopped stirring.

I asked Sieg to mix the chilled crème anglaise and whipped cream.

Meanwhile, I mixed ice and salt and placed them in the outer layer of the ice cream maker.

After sprinkling some more salt on top, the preparation is complete.

The ice cream mixture is then poured into the inner pot, after which the lid is shut tightly.

Afterwards, if the handle is turned for about thirty minutes, the ice cream is complete, or so the manual said.

I turned the handle while receiving expectant stares from the sisters. It was a little a little tough so I became a little teary.

As I turned the handle, the sisters tirelessly watched..... no, attentively watched me. I appreciated it, and even got a little teary-eyed.

In the middle, Sieg asked if she should take over, but I told her the feelings were enough.

Thirty minutes later, when we opened the lid in anticipation, there was a nicely formed batch of ice cream.

First off, to see if the flavour was alright, I asked our expert, grandfather, to sample..... I mean taste. Right, I had him taste the flavour.

"Hm. It's pretty good for a beginner."

“Uwaa~~ what a relief!”

Since it received passing marks from grandfather, we scooped ice cream onto bowls.

A servant arrived timely with langue de chat, so I placed them in ice cream.

“Dearest uncle, this is?”

“Langues de chat. Snacks made using egg whites.”

“Could it be, that you used the egg whites we did not use?”

“Correct!”

Meaning ‘cat tongue’, langue de chat is a dessert from overseas.

I also heard about it from the kitchen staff. The ingredients are egg whites, butter, flour and sugar. It’s a baked biscuit with a light texture. Like the name cat tongue suggests, it was flat and long. The light texture and the sweetness do not stand out, so it goes well with the ice cream which has a deep flavour.

The used tools were being taken away by servants. Arno fell into deep sleep in his cradle.

Now then, we’ll have the ice cream before it melts.

First, I watched the sisters have them.

The moment they put some in their mouths, their eyes shone so brightly that stars might have come out of them.

“Delicious!”

“.....M-Magical.”

I ended up grinning as I watched them happily have ice cream. They really are lovely princesses.

I wanted to keep staring at them, but then the ice cream will melt so we started eating as well.

Just what sort of texture would it have?

As my heart pounded from the mysterious food in front of me, I scooped up a bit and put some into my mouth.

“Uwa, delicious!”

The moment I said my impression, grandfather burst into laughter.

“Grandfather, is there a problem?”

“Problem!? Your eyes are shining like a child’s!”

“Were there stars in my eyes.”

“Really, making me laugh.”

“Did I really have such an expression~?”

I didn’t, did I? When I looked at Sieg while asking that, she was hiding her mouth while her eyes were open thinly. She definitely was laughing. I felt a little embarrassed.

But ice cream was really tasty.

Using fresh milk, the ice cream was rich in flavour, while the texture was smooth. The way it was cool and melted in my mouth was like magic.

When I had some ice cream with a langue de chat, the crispy texture and the soft milky flavour harmonised in my mouth. The sweet scent of vanilla was indescribably good as well.

I felt moved, that it was a luxurious and elegant dessert that I couldn’t describe well.

The nieces praised that it was an amazing magic.

It was a magic that required a lot of strength, but they enjoyed it so I smiled along.

The first ice cream making was a great success.

In the afternoon, we went on a forest stroll to the lake with Sieg and Arno, but that is a story for another time.

Chapter 103 - Compilation of Short Episodes

The Story of Kayneth and Ritzhard

At the ball where dazzling young men and women seek for their lifetime partners, Kayneth, the third son of the viscount of House von Brzeska, entered with a grimace.

It was the first time he was attending a ball.

Kayneth had been living as a commoner for eighteen years.

However, his father whom he had never met before adopted him into the nobility as the eldest son had died just the previous year.

His mother who was working in a factory was apparently working at the viscount's mansion when she was young.

Having relationships in the heat of youth and getting fired after pregnancy, it was a common story among servants working for nobles.

The viscount's second son was sickly, so Kayneth was adopted as a backup successor.

Of course, originally a commoner, there would be no way that Kayneth was used to high society, so he merely leaned against the wall and stared and young men and women chat.

When he gazed somewhere a little ways away, there was a crowd.

At the centre was an elderly gentleman, whom father had instructed Kayneth to remember the face and the name.

Adalbert von Lüneburg. Marquess.

He was taught that he is an influential noble who uses his private funds to build schools for common people, factories or stores where women could work, among many other businesses for the economically weak.

The factory his mother was working at was run by the marquess, so he felt an arbitrary familiarity.

He was taught to greet him if he ever met the marquess at a ball, but unfortunately he did not have the opportunity so he was merely staring blankly at him.

Next to Marquess Lüneburg, there was a young man that did not look to be twenty.

Kayneth was surprised at the appearance of that young man.

Beautiful white hair that was almost like silver and blue eyes that were like gems. The beauty was something that was not of this world.

Kayneth could not help but stare at the appearance that was as though it came straight out of the fantastical paintings at the viscount's manor.

It was not only Kayneth who was like that.

All the people around, regardless of age or sex, had their attention stolen by the young man.

While he was glancing at the white-haired young man as though he was staring at a rare animal, their eyes happened to meet.

The young man smiled slightly at Kayneth before turning away.

That time, Kayneth could only think that he was a frivolous man to smile at strangers.

At the second year of the ball, Kayneth set off with a scolding from his father to put more effort into it.

He properly learned the dance moves, and had remembered sentences that would please women.

The ballroom was still dazzling and colourful.

Kayneth was tasked to invite at least one woman to a dance.

When his heart was about to burst from nervousness, his eyes met a nearby woman's.

"Excus——!?"

The moment he was about to talk to her, someone bumped into him from behind.

"Ah, I'm sorry!"

He knew that he didn't do it purpose because the person had apologised, but the woman in front of him ran away.

When he turned around spitefully, the person standing there was the white-haired young man whom he had seen a year ago.

"Is your back alright? I'm sorry, I wasn't paying attention."

"....."

Seeing the young man bow in apology, he concocted a plan.

Thinking that the man would be a good bait to allure women, Kayneth invited him for a talk.

That was the meeting with the white-haired young man Ritzhard Salonon Revontulet with whom he would be acquainted for a decade.



After introducing themselves, they started chatting while leaning against the wall.

Ritzhard had a fleeting impression, but he later found out that he is from a hunting people who hunt their own food with guns. At first, Kayneth thought that was a joke.

“As if someone so fluffy like you can hunt.”

“Yes I can~”

There are many unfortunate people in the world, and Ritzhard is one of them, or so Kayneth thought.

He had an enervating way of talking, or a unique relaxing aura.

However, his ability to charm women was real, since Kayneth could feel glances from some time ago.

“What did you come here for?”

“Of course to find a wife!”

“Then that’s convenient.”

Kayneth whispered to Ritzhard, telling him that they should talk to the two beauties that were standing far away.

It was a brilliant plan to use Ritzhard as bait, but it sank splendidly.

Ritzhard failed to read the mood and started talking about butchering animals.

“How did talking about the recently popular spreads in the cities turn into talking about butchering animals!”

“No, I was just saying that ptarmigan liver spreads are delicious!”

“You don’t need to talk about the manufacturing process!”

“Hehh, I~ see.”

“.....”

Unfortunately, Ritzhard was a hunter deep down.

“Hey, talk about things women are interested in, such as trending goods, art and flowers.”

“Ah, I know a lot about plants!”

He exclaimed as he pointed at the white flower in a vase by the wall.

“That flower is very pretty, but it’s toxic.”

“.....”

“Cardiac dysfunction, was it? Apparently having some would cause one to have trouble breathing. I think I recall hearing that having even the water in the vase is dangerous~”

That’s not it, Kayneth thought, but he did not have the energy to retort so he quietly listened to Ritzhard talk.

After that, Kayneth kept reuniting with Ritzhard once a year at the ball.

He was doing a foolish thing, repetitively getting fiancées who would run away.

“Come to think of it, Kayneth, aren’t you marrying yet?”

“I’m still alright.”

The year before the last, his father had remarried and had a son.

Now that the succession was no longer instable, people around him did not pester him.

“I’m just here to take a break from the bleak life in the military.”

“Ah, I get you!”

In the snow country, Ritzhard was leading a bleak daily life without anything to play. Kayneth, following a strict schedule in the military, he could only had a break in the ball.

“I wonder what marriage is like~”

“As if I’d know.”

You might not be able to find a wife here? He thought, but he did not say.

He pitied Ritzhard who was looking forward marriage so much.

However, that couldn’t be helped.

In the dazzling world of nobles, even Kayneth once had a dream.



Ten years later.

The ball was no different from usual.

Tonight, the ball that would act as a meeting place for men and women was to open.

What was different from usual was that a famous person who normally did not come to balls had come.

Sieglinde von Wattin.

She was a very famous person, whom everyone in the army knew.

Kayneth saw her only once in the army, but the vivid red hair left an imprint on his mind.

The women were swooning over the gallant figure of Sieglinde.

The men were envious of her who looked more handsome and manly than any others.

However, Ritzhard was different.

He fell in love with her at first sight and suddenly proposed to her.

As he was taking the soldier that was drawing the gaze of many women, Ritzhard earned much ire.

First, to calm the commotion down, Ritzhard and Sieglinde left the hall.

Ritzhard left with a hunched back, while getting curses from ladies.

Sieglinde had her hand on his waist to protect him as she led him out.

From the side, Ritzhard and Sieglinde was the splitting image of a suspect getting arrested by an elite soldier.

Kayneth laughed from seeing such a scene.

Kayneth saw his friend off while praying that he would find happiness this time.

A few months later, a letter with surprising news arrived for him.

What was written was that Sieglinde von Wattin and Ritzhard had married.

There's no telling what might happen in life.

That was what Kayneth thought.

Fin.

Agitated Ritzhard

It had been a few days since I started living with Sieg. Other than the martial race family, it had been a decade since I lived with someone, so I was trying to not get carried away.

I was fluffy every day so I naturally made some mistakes.

One morning,

I woke up early for some reason, I thought of waiting for Sieg at the living room.

It was still dark as the sun did not rise yet. In the dark, I headed out of my room in my pyjamas.

“——Eh?”

For some reason, Sieg's room door was slightly open.

It was always tightly shut, but how come!?

I was worried, so I knocked lightly and spoke out.

“Sieg, Sieglinde.”

I called her name many times, but there was no response.

I could only get bad feelings. The sound of my heart pounding echoed in my head.

“Excuse me, Sieg.”

I knew that it was something I shouldn't do, but I entered Sieg's room.

“!?”

Of course, it was dark in the room. However, when I went inside, there was no one there.

——Sieg is not here.

I returned to my room and lit a lantern to properly investigate, but I couldn't find Sieg.

I went down to the first floor and looked around the rooms in panic, but there was no one.

“Sieg, where are you!?”

I took a look around the mansion, but it was quiet here as well. The dog house, the reindeer shed and the workshop were all quiet.

I felt a presence at the forest near the mansion, so I ran over there, but ended up flinching.

I ended up meeting Teoporon.

“——U-Uwa!”

“.....”

“Ah, I'm sorry. I was, looking for Sieg.”

He did not falter a bit at my behaviour and showed me the boar he caught in the forest.

Did you see Sieg? I was asking, but I was panicking so I couldn't communicate well.

I looked around a lot, but Sieg was nowhere to be seen within the grounds of the mansion.

Could it be, that Sieglinde is already, with the village ——!?

That thought was a frightening one.

Could it be that she could no longer bear living with an over-familiar man? I should have been more considerate.

It's too late to regret.

Before I realised it, I was running to the village.

When I shone the lantern on the snow, there were signs of someone passing here. However, there was the possibility that it was Teoporon's footprints, so I could not rest easy yet.

The villagers were working in the dark. On closer inspection, it was only the women, digging and getting water from the well. I had heard that it was the women's job to protect the house, but I did not know that they also did manual labour.

However, I did not have time to think about those things. Finding Sieg is the most important task.

While looking around, I ran to the fort gates.

Unbelievably, both the iron bars were up, and the bolt to prevent intruders was not there either. I ordered them to at least lock the doors at night, so I was going to scold the soldier in charge of the night duty, but there was no one at the window.

If it's like this, I can't even ask if Sieg came here.

I complained for them to work properly at night, but it seems like there was no effect.

I felt depressed at my weak-mindedness for being a lord.

I went outside and checked the snow on the ground. There were no footprints, but if snow falls the evidence disappears so there is no meaning to checking it.

For now, I bolted the gate so that no one will be able to come in.

If any merchants or travellers that visit in the dark, they can go to the shed outside the gate.

There is a fireplace as well as food there, so they won't freeze to death there.

After finishing the check-up, I felt fatigue washing over my body.

I ran at full speed here, so my heart was pounding heavily.

—— My chest hurts.

That was probably not just because I was tired. There is another reason. I breathed in and out for a little, and then proceeded down the corridor to return home.

"Huh~, I wondered who it was, my lord?"

"!"

Someone looked out from the window, so I flinched a little.

The person who peeked out was the soldier in charge of security of the fort.

So I complained about how the night duty was in poor condition right away.

"Aa~, I did think that someone was here though~"

“.....”

I thought so.

It felt like a waste getting angry.

Even if I shouted here, that would be me just taking out my anger on him, I decided to scold him lightly only.

First, regarding this one, I have to talk to the army headquarters. Even if I talk their superiors, it will be useless.

I thought that the conversation was over now, but the curious young soldier kept asking questions.

“What happened? This early in the morning.”

“Nothing. Just a little stroll.”

“Could it be that you fought with your wife and was chased out of the house?”

“No.”

“Eh~ Really~”

“.....”

Even I talked with him, I would only get depressed so I told him I had business and parted ways with him.

Maybe because it had snowed last night, the path I was treading down had barely any footprints.

I carefully looked around the village, but I couldn't find Sieg.

“Oh my, my lord!”

“Ah, hello.”

The store lady that I coincidentally met greeted me.

“On a stroll this early in the morning?”

“.....Well, I thought that going on morning patrols sometimes wouldn't be so had.”

“Is that so, it was rare sight, so I wondered if anything was up.”

“.....N-No, not really.”

I hardly went on patrols. My intuition must have dulled from my depression.

For now, I asked the whereabouts of Sieg.

“Have you seen Sieg?”

“Not today.”

“Nn? Not today, what do you mean by that?”

“Sieglinde-san takes a stroll around the area around this hour, so she should be back in the house by now, I believe?”

“!?”

That was unexpected. Sieg was taking a stroll in the village every day.

I thanked the store lady and ran back home as fast as I could.

I ran through the forest and the small hills.

The sky was getting faintly brighter, that it was easier to see the surroundings.

When I passed the gate and ran up to the front door, I saw a tall red-haired figure standing there.

“Sieglinde!”

When I called out the name, the woman I wanted to see turned around.

I ran up and grabbed her arms.

“——What’s wrong!?”

Even when she asked, I couldn’t answer. I was having trouble breathing for the second time today.

I never ran this much in my life, so I didn’t know how to breath, only puffing out white breaths.

“Are you alright?”

“Y-Yeah.”

While grabbing Sieg’s arms, I hung my head down. I was tired from running so much from the morning and an indescribable feeling of relief came over at the same time so I was very exhausted.

After I calmed down, I suggested that we talk inside.

“Sorry, it must have been cold outside?”

“No, my body was warmed from taking a stroll, so there’s no trouble.”

“Is that so? What a relief.”

“Aren’t you the one feeling cold?”

“N-No, it’s not that cold.”

“Is that so.”

Come to think of it, I was still in my pyjamas. I reflected on my actions.

“Now, it’s cold outside, so come inside.”

“Aa.”

We went inside in a strange atmosphere.

Miruporon was had lit up the fireplace so it was warm inside. It was a thankful thing.

When I sat down across from her in the awkward atmosphere, Ruruporon served warm drinks.

After having some herb tea and catching my breath, we started talking.

“So, erm—— Sieg, you go out on strolls every morning?”

“Aa. Sorry. I forgot to report.”

She told me that taking a stroll was part of her daily life. At her wonderful and composed hobby, I was at a loss for words for a while.

“N-No, it’s fine going on strolls.”

To go on a stroll in the dark, I couldn’t imagine such a thing. To immediate think the worst, what an amazing confusion.

Since I also shouldn’t keep secrets, I properly told her about that.

“Frankly, I had thought that you might have run away so I went outside in panic.”

“I did a bad thing.”

“No, thinking calmly, I can tell that Sieg is not one to go out quietly.....”

It might have been that my head was not working properly form just waking up. I felt really sorry for suspecting her.

“I think I told you before, but my previous fiancées ran away so many times..... So when I couldn’t see Sieg in the morning.....”

“Aa, so that was how it was.”

“.....Yes.”

My considerate wife understood my exaggerated action.

“Don’t worry. I won’t run away nor hide. It would be unthinkable to disappear silently.”

“Thank you, thank you.”

I felt happy from her declaration, that my eyes got very teary from that.

I might have been afraid of people disappearing without me knowing. It’s most likely because I had been scarred by fiancées running away.

When I explained the situation, Sieg suggested a few things.

“From now on, when we go out silently, we should leave a note on the living room table.”

“B-But, wouldn’t that be a bother for you?”

“Just writing a little on a piece of paper is nothing. Don’t worry.”

What a magnanimous woman. I felt so thankful that I clasped my hands for her in my head.

“In return, I’ll keep going on morning strolls.”

“You can do that as much as you want.”

That was the story of the day when I made a promise with Sieg.

Luca Saw

While passing the window of the store, Luca became disgusted seeing the inside of the store.

(Mother, are you at the meeting to see the lord’s wife again.)

Today, yet again, there was a meeting of people wanting to meet the lord’s wife.

(That person’s quite amazing though.)

A woman charming other women. Luca wondered at the mysterious scene.

Just who are there, he thought and checked.

After checking everyone, he felt a chill run down his spine at the last moment.

That person had especially pretty hair and the clear eyes were looking at the lord’s wife.

Luca thought that the person who had the hair in one braid was the prettiest.

The moment he realised who that was, he became angry.

(.....Shit! That, is the lord!)

Among the women, the lord Ritzhard was mixed in there.

How does he look so natural with the women, he wondered.

To begin with, it's strange enough for the wife to look manly, Luca thought.

“This is wrong!”

Outside the window, the boy ran away from the store screaming.

~ Fin ~

Eru and Aru's Fantastical Fairy Story

In the summer of the third year after meeting uncle Ritzhard, me, my little sister, grandfather, father and Ritz the dog, four people and one animal went to the village of the fairies.

Grandmother and mother are staying home again.

Listen to grandfather and father and be good children. We promised that before we went.

Father was worried about sleeping inside the ship, but that was undue worry.

My little sister quietly read books, and I drew pictures.

We arrived two days later.

We finally arrived at the small port city.

I was surprised that it was cold rather than cool even though it was summer. I put on the long sleeves we brought from home, and got on the carriage.

After getting on the carriage, my little sister could not calm down. While looking at the scenery, she was throwing exclamations everywhere.

Like uncle Ritzhard had told us, the greenery of this country is beautiful.

It's very different from the thick forests of my homeland.

We could see a bright forest for the first time.

I had read that most of this country consists of forests and lakes.

When I told that to little sister, she was very happy, even saying, "Because this is the country of fairies!"

My little sister believes in fairies.

Still, it couldn't be helped because the reason for that, uncle Ritzhard really is like a fairy.

His white hair shines silver when it receives sunlight.

His blue eyes shine like gems and are very clear.

His eyelashes are so long that they might even make sounds when he blinks, and his skin is white without any flaws.

The appearance was as though it came straight out of a picture book. Both my little sister and I were fascinated by it.

Uncle was also very knowledgeable about the forest.

Trees where honey can be found, flowers that can be eaten, leaves that can be used for tea, we were taught many things.

We had thought that the dark forests were scary places, but thanks to uncle guiding us, the forest was a good playground for my little sister and me. Of course, we were keeping the promise that the two of us would not go in alone.

While we were absorbed in the scenery, we arrived at the village.

"——Eh!?"

Little sister was surprised upon seeing the entrance of the village. Because there was a huge wall in front of it.

Grandfather explained. The walls were built three centuries ago to keep out harmful beasts.

"Hehh, I see~"

“It’s alright now.”

“Really? There are no bears?”

“Iyaa, please no bears.....”

Grandfather suddenly shut his mouth and stared up at the sky.

Having become uneasy, father asked if it really was alright.

“No, it’s alright.”

I decided to not mind what he said in a small voice. From the way speaks, it might be a safe bear.

Before we went in a soldier came out from a small shed.

When grandfather showed his ID, he led us inside.

Inside the fort, there were two iron bars, and when the soldier gave a signal, they were raised with a bell ringing.

Grandfather then wrote something at the window in the middle, and when that was over we headed to the entrance of the village.

“U-Uwa!”

“.....Pretty.”

Surprisingly, the inside of the village was full of greenery too. We were told that there is a house before getting to the forest.

“Ah, uncle!”

Before we found the house, we met uncle Ritzhard. It seemed that he was coming out to greet us.

“It’s been a while, princesses.”

“Uncle, you too!”

Uncle came over and hugged my sister and me.

It had been a year, so I felt like crying from happiness.

After that, uncle also hugged grandfather, but father waved his hand, declining the offer, saying that the feeling was enough.

After our reunion with uncle Ritzhard, we were guided through the village.

“!?”

“.....Wa!”

The red brick houses were lovely.

But more importantly, we were surprised at the villagers.

Everyone had white hair and blue eyes like uncle Ritzhard.

This was indeed the village of fairies.

Until we arrived at uncle’s house, my little sister was absent-minded, but we were then surprised by something else.

When the mansion door was opened, we saw an impossible creature.

—— A giant white bear!?

Before we realised it, my sister and I were hiding behind uncle.

“Ah~ Edelgard, Adeltraud, it’s alright~.”

“B, B-B-But, there’s a bear-san! A huge bear-san!”

“That’s a kind bear-san.”

“!?”

After hearing uncle’s words, I slowly checked the figure.

On closer look, it was not a real bear but someone wearing bear fur.

But he was bulky and scary.

“His name is Teoporon. He greets people by pounding his chest. You two can return a lady’s greeting.”

Uncle introduced the white bear-san to us.

Then, he pounded his chest as was said.

Instead of curtsying, my little sister pounded her chest like the white bear-san did. Father did a similar thing with a serious expression.

I was a little embarrassed, so I curtsied slightly. It would be nice if I could do it by the time I am returning home.

When we went inside, aunt Sieglinde greeted us.

She had the baby that was born in spring in her arms.

Arno who could now walk also greeted us.

“Uwaaaa! Cute!”

“.....Indeed.”

Named Veronica by our grandfather, the baby girl had clear eyes and quirky hair, just like uncle.

“This child will become a beauty in the future.”

Father said that while looking at uncle Ritzhard, so he received a cold glare from aunt.
Grandfather had Arno on his lap while he was looking at Veronica who was in a cradle.

“Ah, cute. They really are cute children.”

Grandfather looked really happy.

He always looked a little sad when he talked about Ritzhard, so I felt happy as well.

Afterwards, it was time for lunch.

On the table, there were only dishes that I had never seen before.

I was especially surprised by reindeer meat.

Uncle said that it might have a strong taste, but it was delicious.

The raspberry sauce was sweet and sour, and went well with the meat.

We even had blueberry pie for dessert.

We ate so much that it was as though it was lie that we ate only a little with my little sister.

That day, we were a little tired so we rested early.

The next day, we went to pick berries in the forest, and the day after that we went fishing.

On the last day, we wore traditional clothes and played a little with the village children.

The fun days passed in the blink of an eye.

When we had to part with uncle, my little sister cried so much that it was a little hard.

However, uncle Ritzhard said that he will come over to play, so she stopped crying. I was glad that she was simple.

The experience at the village of the fairies became beautiful memories in our hearts.

Fin.

The Children and the Summer Forest

Today, I went out to the forest with my nieces and nephew.

“Uncle, today I made cream cheese and honey with older sister!”

“Hehh, sounds delicious.”

The nieces made snacks for eating in the forest.

A simple sandwich of honey and cream cheese in bread, it's a snack that is loved by the people of this country.

It seemed that she put in a lot of effort for going out today, so I felt happy.

While I was feeling satisfied, I heard a deep sigh from next to me so I looked over there.

“Haa? Not meat sandwich?”

The cheeky Claus voiced his opinion to the nieces.

He looked discontent as he held the sandwich basket in his hand.

After hearing that, Adeltraud revealed the secret regarding the meal today.

“Uncle likes honey.”

“Ha?”

“He doesn't eat meat!”

“Uncle, you said that you usually have meat.”

He murmured softly so that the sisters won’t hear.

When I patted Claus for his kindness, he got angry and told me to stop.

Adolescent boys are hard to deal with.

Even as he complained about many things, Claus accompanied us on our stroll.

The early summer forest had beautiful flowers and lush foliage.

Edelgard and Adeltraud drew pictures to record flowers they found. Apparently they are going to find out the name with an encyclopaedia when they return home.

“What’s so fun about this?”

“You think so?”

From a young age, I felt calmer when I walked through lush green forests, and I felt happy from finding herbs in the forest, but Claus said that it was not so.

“Then, why don’t we try making cider?”⁶

“Nn?”

“Ah~ erm, it’s something similar to Apfelschorle of this country, I guess?”

Apfelschorle is a sparkling liquor made using apples.

I told them the story of me getting surprised around ten years ago, when I was served sparkling apple liquor when I asked for cider in a store of this country.

6 In Japan and Korea, cider refers to soft drinks like sprite.

“I don’t really understand, but you mean we can make sparkling water from things available in the forest?”

“You’re right. In addition, what I’ll make is recommended for early summer.”

“?”

I called over the sisters who were observing flowers and told them the plan.

“Uncle, is there something?”

“Thank you for coming. From now on, we’ll be making sparkling juice using things available in the forests.”

That’s amazing, the two piped up at the same time.

“Uncle, what will be making juice with?”

“Nn, that tree.”

The ingredient was right in front of us.

“Eh, that’s a pine tree.”

“You know very well, Claus.”

I reached out to pat his head, but then I remembered that he got angry a while ago so I stopped. Instead, I changed the trajectory and patted Edelgard and Adeltraud.

“W-Why are you patting Eru and Aru when they didn’t say anything.”

Well, you get angry when I pat you.

Adolescent boys are difficult after all.

I patted their head without much meaning, but the sisters received it gladly with smiles.

“Uncle, we can make juice out of trees, not flowers?”

“Yes. If we dip the leaves in water and expose them to the sun, the water in the bottle will become sparkling water.”

“Really!?”

“It’s true. Let’s get some leaves.”

The way the sisters’ eyes gleamed as they heard my story was cute.

Claus looked at me as though he was looking at a fraud.

If fresh early summer pine needles aren’t used for making cider, it tastes bitter.

So this season is the best opportunity.

I climbed the straight pine trees and collected leaves.

Since the yellow bits at the edges create acerbity, the leaves were cut in the middle.

In the middle, Claus said that he wanted to do it too, so I taught him how to climb trees.

After we filled a small basket full of pine needles, we took a short break.

Claus was staring at the pine needles in the basket with a puzzled expression.

“Uncle, are these sweet?”

“I wonder? I never tried them raw so I have no idea.”

Full of curiosity, Claus tried some raw pine needles.

“!”

Of course it was not tasty. He quickly spat them out.

“What is this!”

“Well, I did think they won’t be tasty.”

I explained that the juice won’t be getting sweet from the pine needles.

“What do you mean!?”

“That’s a normal leaf.”

“Say that quicker!”

“So~rry.”

As to how the juice is made, the yeast in the pine needles become active when it receives sunlight. They then collect the sugar, and during their movements the water becomes carbonated.

I made it a few times when I was little, but the fact that father had been using the sugar in secret was found out so the production was halted. The juice has a sad memory to it.

We had honey sandwich as we talked about the pine needle juice, and then returned home.

After we returned, we promptly started making juice.

“First, we pour water in a pot and boil it.”

We worked at a corner of father-in-law’s ranch.

“Claus, can you measure the sugar please?”

“Alright.”

I left weighing the sugar to Claus.

As for Edelgard and Adeltraud, I asked them to rinse the pine needles.

“If we wash it too much, the yeast becomes thinner, so rinse it lightly.”

After instructing the sisters, I got down to sterilising the bottle and making sugar water.

The bottle we were to use were empty bottle of alcohol father-in-law drank. To sterilise that, I boiled that in a pot.

For the second pot, I merely boiled water. That was for the drink.

Once the sterilisation was complete, the bottle was left to dry.

In the boiling water, sugar was mixed in.

While letting the water cool, I helped out with father-in-law's ranch work.

As a reward, I got freshly made sausages.

Two hours later, after checking if the hot water cooled down, we started working on the next step.

“Can you please the bottles with pine needles?”

In two bottles, we put in the lightly rinsed pine needles. The preparations were finished by putting sugar water in there.

“Don’t plug it tight, but put a cloth over the lid and fasten it with a string.

The reason is because if the lid is airtight, there is the danger of the bottle exploding from the fermentation process.

At night, the activities of the yeast stop so they have to be shut tight to not make the carbon fly away.

Once it is left for a few days, the sparkling juice is complete.

The finished sparkling water has lactic acids and acetic acids, so it tasted bitter.

Since it was sour, I added in honey and squeezed fruit juice to adjust the flavour.

I had my cooperators taste the amber-coloured sparkling drink mixed with honey.

“Uwa~, it’s bubbly and sweet.”

“.....It’s delicious.”

“So-so, I think.”

The sparkling drink had a soft taste.

The cider was very popular among the children, so we went into the forest again on another day to make more.

Fin.

The Children’s Observation Diary

“Stu——pid! That’s not true!”

“It’s not stupid——! It’s true——!”

The two that are fighting fiercely are Claus, the son of the eldest son of House Wattin, and Adeltraud, the daughter of the third son of House Wattin. Edelgard was panicking a little ways away from them.

“As if uncle Ritzhard would be a fairy, stupid!”

“It’s true! He is a fairy!”

As to why this happened, while the sisters were drawing fairy pictures, Clause saw them and realised that the model was their uncle.

Adeltraud drew a person in snowy scenery, while Edelgard captured a fantastical snow fairy in the snow.

White braided hair and blue eyes, from those traits, it was clear that it was Ritzhard.

Seeing that, Claus was planning on lightly teasing, “Uncle’s not a fairy,” but that statement lit a fire to the anger of Adeltraud, who firmly believed that Ritzhard was a fairy.

“What part of him is a fairy, he’s just an old soldier!”

“Uncle’s not a soldier!”

“That’s not what it means!”

“He eats flowers!”

“Haa, what the heck!?”

Adeltraud suddenly ran out the room. Edelgard followed shortly after.

Few minutes later, Adeltraud came back inside with a flower.

“I’ll give this to uncle.”

“No, feeding that to uncle, don’t you feel sorry?”

“Why!? He said that he loves flowers!”

“If you take it to him with expectations, he’d have no choice but to force it down his throat.”

“Then I’ll ask a maid to take it to him!!”

Adeltraud said that they can peek through the window to see what Ritzhard does with the flower.

After that, they asked a nearby servant to take the flower they picked from a garden to Ritzhard.

Then, the children started running. They headed for the window where they could peek into Ritzhard’s room.

Since the window was where Adeltraud couldn’t reach, they asked the gardener for a box and peeked into the room with that.

Inside, the couple was sitting side by side in a great mood.

Seeing that they weren’t late to see the servant deliver the flower, Claus felt relieved.

“Wa, it came—mugu!”

Claus hurriedly shut Adeltraud’s mouth, while she was looking excitedly.

They were peeking into the room using the gap in the curtain, but fortunately they weren’t found out, so he let out a sigh.

As he received the flower from the servant, he smiled slightly after heard that it was a present from the niece.

He enjoyed the scent, and made a broader smile.

The servant bowed and left the room.

From here, the three children swallowed their breaths and watched every single movement of their uncle.

After momentarily spinning the flower with his fingers, Ritzhard started talking to his wife.

Sieglinde darted his eyes about and looked flustered.

“What might uncle be saying? It’s the first time seeing aunt getting embarrassed like that.”

“.....”

Claus checked once again if aunt really was being shy. Of course, her cheek was dyed red from embarrassment.

Could it be that something that shouldn’t be shown to the young sisters is starting, Claus started worrying, but he couldn’t move because he was so curious as to what will happen next.

Ritzhard hugged Sieglinde by her shoulder and leaned in. He grabbed her hand and whispered something into her ears, before decorating her red hair with the flower he had in his hand.

When he whispered something into his wife’s ear again, the children witnessed their aunt blushing completely red.

“N-Now, let’s go!”

Claus said that and took the sisters away.



“Haa, that was nice~”

Adeltraud said in wonder. It seemed like Edelgard had the same opinion as her little sister.

“We can take another flower to him later. When aunt is not with him.”

“No, it’s alright.”

“Eh?”

“It’s been confirmed that uncle Ritzhard is not human.”

“Really!?”

“Yeah.”

Claus thought,

Making that ferocious aunt become embarrassed like that is a feat impossible for a human.

“Uncle really might be a fairy.”

“See, I told you!?”

By recalling his aunt acting shy, a chill ran down Claus’s spine.

From witnessing such a scene, he could not help but agree to the opinion of his cousins.

Fin.

Grandfather's Joy.

Today, my grandson, his wife, and my great-grandchildren are coming over.

I can't adequately describe how much I have been looking for this day.

The youngest grandson, Ritzhard, became a father.

It was the first time I am meeting with their youngest son Ehrenfried. I'm worried that he might be afraid of me.

As for the bear fur, I once ended up making Ulrich cry so it was put away as decoration in the bedroom.

For this day, I bought many new books for Veronica. I wonder if she will like them.

I was also bothered whether Krimhilde became a little calmer. Really, that tomboyish lass, just who does she take after.

Arno was sending me a letter every month. From the firm wording, I felt happy that he grew well.

The butler announced the arrival of my grandson's family.

I wanted to go out to the front door and greet them, but I patiently endured.

While I was waiting on the specially ordered sofa for eight people, there was a loud knock on the door.

"——Come in."

"Great-grandfather——!!"

At the same time the door opened, Krimhilde flew to me like a bullet.

I somehow caught her and released a sigh of relief.

Really, are you trying to kill me!? Or so I was going to yell, but.....

“Great-grandfather, I really really wanted to see you!”

Hearing that, my complaint holed up in the inside of my throat.

After Krimhilde, other grandchildren came in.

“Great-grandfather, it has been a while.”

“Mm, indeed. Ah, right. Veronica, because I wanted to read some time ago, I bought dozens of books, so you can take a look at the library later.”

“Y-Yes, I look forward to it.”

Veronica was making a humble smile, but the moment I talked about books, she was smiling like a blooming flower.

“Great-grandfather, it has been a while.”

“Oh, Arno.”

Arno came in while holding Ulrich’s hand. He grew quite big. He still has a gallant face taking after his mother.

The easygoing Ulrich hugged me without saying a thing, so I embraced him back without saying anything as well.

“Rim, let me have the spot on great-grandfather’s knee.”

“No way!”

“Both of you, stop fighting! Get down from his lap, because that burdens great-grandfather.”

“How come! Arno-oniichan’s like a sister-in-law!”

“What!? Rim, where do you learn those things!?”

My great-grandchildren started fighting over me.

The popularity is troubling. Good, do it more.

“Uwa, everyone gathered around grandfather!”

At the end, my grandson, his wife and Ehrenfried arrived.

“Ah, grandfather, it has been a while!”

“Yeah.”

“Grandfather-in-law, I’m glad to see you in good health.”

“Same to you.”

I’m meeting them after three years, but the couple still looks to be on great terms.

“Now, show me Ehrenfried.”

“Yes~”

The youngest child, whom Ritzhard was hugging, was looking over here interestedly.

“Ehrenfried, it’s the first time meeting you.”

“.....Yes, nice to meet you!”

“Eren, it’s great-grandfather.”

“Great, grand, father?”

“Yes. It’s grandfather’s father.”

When I showed him my palm, he stretched his hand out to me.

The youngest son is a surprisingly amiable child, like his father.

Even though it was our first meeting, he relaxed and entrusted himself to me.

“Sieglinde.”

“Yes.”

“Come here.”

When I beckoned her, she came over with light movements and kneeled on one knee.

“You did great. To have five children, it is an amazing thing. I will always be proud of you.”

“Thank you, very much.”

Before handing Ehrenfried over to Sieglinde, I gently hugged her.

“Ritzhard.”

“Yes!”

I only called his name, but he quickly came over here and sat down in front of me.

“Are you a monster!?”

“Pardon?”

I had thought that he was the only one looking young, but on closer inspection he did have wrinkles under his eyes. When he smiled, the wrinkles grew deeper.

Ritzhard was properly aging too. I somehow felt relieved at that fact.

“——.....”

I was going to say something, but the words didn't come out.

Things came welling up, so I covered my face with my hand.

"Grandfather."

"....."

"For a while, let's all live here"

"....."

Ritzhard hugged this old man's body and patted my back.

"I forced all the work on father."

"Ah, ahh, is that so. That is, an amusing, thing."

I really have become useless through aging.

To think I would ever be comforted by my grandson.

For some time, this quiet mansion will become noisy as well.

There were many things I wanted to do, so it will become busy again. I psyched myself up again.

Fin.

Chapter 104 - Amnesiac Ritzhard

Today, I will be making linen with the village women.

I will be away from the house the whole day.

A year and eight months old now, my son was left to father-in-law. He is not inhibited, same as my husband, so there shouldn't be a problem.

Father-in-law, who likes children, gleefully started chatting to my son, asking what he would like to play.

Mother was full of energy to make berry jam from the morning. It seems that she was going to bake pie was well, and she seems to look forward to it.

My husband Ritzhard said that he will be doing maintenance of the sheds.

I told him to not hurt himself.

"Then, I'll be off."

"Sieg, you be careful too!"

It's probably only my husband that says such things to me.

My family, my parents had once said, "Even if you meet a criminal, go easy on them." I think there's a limit to being rude.

"Then, Sieg, a farewell kiss."

"Ha?"

"It's just fine to have it on the cheek."

My husband pointed his cheek towards me.

This is outdoors, and mother-in-law had been going back and forth.

It would be embarrassing if we were to be seen. Thinking that, I pushed my husband's body back.

When I furtively glanced at him, he had his hand to his mouth as he wore an expression of shock.

“Sieglinde, how come.....”

“There are others outdoors.”

“I don’t mind though.”

“I do.”

“Alright.”

He looked dejected, but he seems to have accepted it.

“I like Sieg’s tough side as well.”

He said something strange, but I ignored it.

I patted his shoulder telling him to take care of the house and then I went out.

When I stared up at the sky, a clear blue sky was spread over me.

The colour was like the beautiful shade of my husband’s eyes.



In the evening, I was returning home after work.

I had received chickpeas from Aina, so I was walking home while thinking if I should use them for soup tomorrow, but ——

“Linde-cha~~n.”

Mother-in-law was running over here.

Just what happened? I also walked over quickly.

“Mother-in-law, what happened?”

“U-Un, y-you see~, erm, big trouble~~”

Even as she did not sound as though she was in peril, I carefully listened.

“Ritchan, Ritchan fell off the ladder!”

“What!”

“He was just scratched a little, no big injuries, but,”

I felt relieved that there were no grave injuries.

However, at the next phrase mother-in-law said, I was aghast.

“It seems like Ritchan lost his memory from getting hit in the head~~”

“!?”

I dropped the chickpeas in my hand.

That can't be, for my husband to lose his memory.....

For now, father-in-law judged that it would be best to not cause a fuss. It was decided that we will keep quiet about it to the village.

We also decided that we will not provide unnecessary information.

Father-in-law is to act as a doctor, while mother-in-law is to act as a friendly neighbour lady.

Since there will be confusion if my son meets his father who lost his memory, Aina and Emmerich are taking care of them.

What an unbelievable situation, I thought and stared up at the sky.

Seeing me like that, mother-in-law gently patted my back.

“Linde-chan, it’s okay. Ritchan will definitely remember.”

“.....Yes, i-indeed.”

I realised something after talking that much.

Would it not be better if I didn’t return home?

“Linde-chan, please stay with Ritchan.”

“What should I say.....”

“Linde-chan, I think you can stay as Linde-chan.”

That is..... rather troubling.

Just what should I do?

However, my husband must be troubled too, since he doesn’t have any memories. So I might be able to console him at the least.

I returned home after making up my mind.

I went back with an expression of nervousness, but there was father-in-law, relaxed as always.

“Sieglinde-san, welcome ba~ck.”

“.....I’m back.”

“It was a little hot today eh~”

“.....Yes, indeed.”

Seeing the ever unchanging behaviour of father-in-law, I felt exasperated.

His only son lost his memory. How carefree, I thought.

However, thanks to him, my fluttering heart calmed down.

I breathed deeply and shifted my mood so that I could act normally.

With the berry juice I received from mother-in-law, I headed for my husband's bedroom.



When I knocked on the door, a reply came back quickly.

“Yes! Please come in!”

It was an unexpectedly bright voice. I started suspecting if he really did lose his memory.

When I opened the door, I saw my husband leaning against the bed. He had a book in his hands.

“Huh, you are——?”

“I am.....”

I then thought that I should have made up a story. I was at a loss for words.

Seeing my husband look at me interestedly, I really felt that he did indeed lose his memory.

“Could you be a lady Richelle-obasan knows?”

“Well, that's, about it.”

Surprisingly, I was shocked at the fact that my husband did not remember me.

Uncharacteristic of myself, my fingers started trembling.

Suddenly, I thought of my husband's dejected expression in the morning.

Why did I reject that simple kiss.

Such simple greetings, anyone can do that. Back then, I couldn't do it because of embarrassment.

I felt deep regret, that I should have kissed him and went off with smiles.

"What's wrong?"

"N-Nothing....."

I noticed that I had been standing awkwardly at the door with the berry juice in my hand.

I quickly approached and gave him a cup of juice.

"Thank you——. Waa, you!"

"W-What is it?"

"I think you have strong and clear eyes."

"....."

I recalled my husband telling me that he fell in love with at first sight.

Since he was saying the same thing even after he lost his memory, I ended up chuckling.

"Ah, eh? Did I say something weird?"

"No, nothing of the sort."

I felt relieved after talking with him.

Even after he lost his memory, my husband was the same.

“Erm, may I have your name?”

I stared up at the ceiling.

I felt a pain in my chest.

“Sieglinde.”

When I answered so, he asked me how he should call me.

“You can call me, whatever you’d like.”

“Then, Sieglinde-san.”

The current situation is different from when we first met.

Back then, we were talking with marriage as a premise. Thus, he wasn’t calling me by a nickname this time.

“I certainly don’t seem to have memories.....”

“Apparently.”

“I may cause inconveniences.”

“Yeah.”

It’s alright, don’t worry.

That was what I was thinking, but tears welled up in my eyes.



Since there were no injuries, from the next day, my husband..... Ritzhard went back to working.

He doesn't have memories, but it seems that the snow country life was embedded into his body.

He woke up early, took care of reindeer and dogs, and chopped wood until it was time for breakfast.

He greeted the Rango family in a refreshing manner as well.

Surprisingly, it was the usual Ritzhard.

I continued to him.

I felt that there won't be a problem if I was with my son Arno, so I greeted him.

It was fortunate that he couldn't say 'dad' yet.

Arno was calling me 'mum' so I introduced Arno as my son to Ritzhard.

"Ah, Sieglinde-san, so you were married."

Upon hearing that, I felt sad.

I told myself that I could only place away my feelings for now.

Ritzhard doted on Arno all the time.

I felt relieved at seeing that.

Even after he lost his memory, daily was surprisingly the same.

The difference was that Ritzhard and I were not couples but strangers.

We told him that I was a widow raising my son on my own.

It really was a sad lie.

A quack doctor, a neighbouring lady, a widow and her son. In addition, a martial race family.
Ritzhard did not seem to be suspicious of this strange cohabitation.

He was bright as usual.

However, I was going mad.

I'm right next to him, but I am not able to act like we did. It was suffocating.

I don't know how many times I retracted my hands as they reached for his innocent smile.

Since Ritzhard always reached out first, I realised that I had never felt lonely before.

Not knowing my feelings, Ritzhard said something very cruel.

"Sieglinde-san is a very diligent and pretty person. Your husband must have been the happiest person in the world."

Hearing that, my chest tightened in pain.

I wonder if this will continue on, when I thought that, the pain grew stronger.

As Ritzhard smiled serenely, I turned my back on him.

I didn't know what I should say to him.



A month passed since Ritzhard lost his memory.

We managed to keep this a secret from the villagers and continued living quietly.

I headed to the village to make linen.

Everyone chatted as they spun thread.

Today, talking about family was painful.

I ended up making Aina, the only other person who knew, worry.

When I returned home, the house was silent.

In front of the door, there was a note from my parents-in-law that they're on a stroll with Arno.

I wonder if Ritzhard is home?

I peeked into the living room. Then, I saw the figure of Ritzhard sleeping on a chair——

Even when I entered the room, he did not stir.

I sat down next to him.

I thought again as I stared at his profile.

I love Ritzhard.

I reached out to his silver-white hair.

It was fluffy and felt nice to the touch.

It felt like I was touching it after eons, that I felt very happy.

I wanted to enjoy it fully, but since it would be if he woke I quickly retracted my hand.

Before, because Ritzhard's affection was too embarrassing, I ended up rejecting it quite a few times.

Why did I do that, regret washed over me.

There's Arno and Ritzhard, and my parents-in-law are healthy —— I was leading a life that did not lack anything.

However, I felt empty.

How wretched. I felt ashamed at myself for these womanly feelings.

If this is a dream, I wish for it to end quickly.

Suddenly, I had a stupid thought.

In fairytales, kisses undo curses.

If I kiss Ritzhard on the cheek, won't his memory come back, I thought as I carefully approached.

I was moving slowly, but the chair creaked.

However, Ritzhard did not stir.

I approached my lips to his cheek.

The moment they were about to touch——

“No, Sieglinde-san.”

Ritzhard said as he still had his eyes closed. I was frightened.

Unmoving from his posture, he opened his eyelids.

An awkward silence enveloped us.

I couldn't stand it, so I spoke up.

“Since when were you awake?”

“Ever since Sieglinde-san came into the room.”

“That's from the beginning.”

I never knew he was good at feigning sleep. Should I feel happy at this new discovery? I felt confused.

As I agonised over how I should make up an excuse, Ritzhard spoke to me.

“Even so, Sieglinde-san is awful.”

“I apologise for touching you selfishly. For, trying to kiss you.”

“That’s not it.”

He approached me and pressed my waist down with his weight. I couldn’t move.

Anyway, what does he mean by “That’s not it”

“You don’t know? Why I’m angry?”

“.....Yes.”

“I won’t let you go until you answer me.”

“.....”

Why is Ritzhard coming on me so severely.

He is usually soft and does not act like this. Because of that, I ended up panicking.

“What should I do. If you don’t know, should I punish you?”

“.....”

What punishment would he deliver. I couldn’t even imagine.

However, I was resigned to my fate.

I am in the wrong.

“I’m sorry.”

“You’re awful.”

“I won’t ask you to forgive me.”

“Of course. Because, I feel that Sieglinde-san, you see your husband in me.”

“Eh?”

“In your eyes, I am not reflected. It feels as though you are looking at someone else.”

“Ritzhard, what are you talking about.....?”

“I wonder if you still love your former husband? You’re approaching to satisfy your own emotions.”

Then, I could guess why he was angry.

Ritzhard was jealous. At himself, before he lost his memory.

I felt relieved for some reason, and felt exhausted.

Before I realised it, tears were rolling down my face.

Seeing that, Ritzhard was aghast.

“Ah, uwa, Sieglinde-san, I’m sorry! I-I didn’t mean to make you cry——”

His grip loosened and he sat down.

Sitting next to me, Ritzhard could not do anything else but panic.

After calming down, I slowly spoke to Ritzhard.

“.....So, you, love me.”

When I asked that, he nodded in confirmation.

I'm glad. Really.

We can live like we always had.

While I was feeling relieved, my parents-in-law hurriedly came back into the living room.

"Welcome back."

Ritzhard greeted my parents-in-law and reached out for Arno.

"Arno, welcome back!"

"I'm back, da.....d"

"Eh?"

Ritzhard sounded surprised upon hearing Arno.

After that, he turned around to me.

"Uwa, Sieg, did you hear, he just called me dad! Yay~ ~!Ah."

As he lifted Arno high into the air, Ritzhard made an awkward expression.

"What's wrong?"

"Eh~ erm. I remembered everything."

The moment I heard that, a warm feeling ran through my cheeks.

I unconsciously murmured, I'm happy.

“Sieg, sorry..... father, mother, too.”

Ritzhard apologised sheepishly. Certainly, he got his memories back.



“I, really was in pain——”

Sitting next to me, Ritzhard recounted about the time when he had lost his memory.

“Sieg was extremely cute and kind, so I fell in love again, but you said that you were a widow and didn’t look at me!”

Even when he had lost his memory, he still liked me. I never noticed.

“Please like me~~ I sent such gazes, but you merely smiled troublingly, so~~”

“I see.”

I would have never guessed.

We were each others’ unrequited love.

“When I was pretending to be asleep, I was doing it out of hope that I might be approached. I was happy, but I felt that it wasn’t what I wanted..... but I thought it might be nice after all, but it didn’t feel good in the end——”

While talking, I reached out for Ritzhard.

When I stroked his hair, he closed his eyes delightedly.

It was a blessing that such a meeting existed.

I went around and kissed him on the cheek.

“Fufu,” Ritzhard laughed strangely.

“What?”

“No, Sieg fawning over me, is very cute.”

“.....What was that?”

“You’re the cutest in the world!”

After saying that, he hugged me.

He kept whispering words of love into my ear, so I felt helpless from the embarrassment.

Indeed, his affection is overly embarrassing, but as there is no second time for the time we spend together, I decided to continue cherishing it.

— The End —

Chapter 105 - The Happenings Over a Picture

From the morning, I helped father-in-law in organising his library.

Apparently this room was to be given to the eldest son.

We packed books from the bookshelves into boxes. Most are to be donated to a library.

Mother-in-law said that the cleaning should have been left to servants, but father-in-law said that he'll do it himself because of personal belongings.

While I was struggling to arrange the books, father-in-law who was working a little ways away suddenly burst into laughter.

When I wondered what it might be, he said that he found something amazing and beckoned me over.

“What is it?”

When I approached, there was something like a large album in his hand.

The cover was smooth leather and did not have anything written on it.

When he opened it, there was a picture of a gallant young red-haired officer.

Wearing white uniforms and a sharp expression, the figure could only be expressed as handsome.

The age is around in the late teens. He was holding a hat in one hand and sitting in a chair.

He was handsome enough for someone to fall in love with him at first sight.

Father-in-law asked if I could guess who it is with a trembling voice.

“Sieglinde-san, right?”

“Correct!”

As I thought!!

No, I felt that it was Sieg at first sight.

Compared to when I first met her, her hair is shorter and her eyes are quite sharp.

When I asked, he replied that it was from a little more than a decade ago.

“What do you think?”

“She must have been very popular with women.”

When I said that, father-in-law burst into laughter.

“Ritzhard-kun, can you guess what the picture was for?”

“H~m.”

I wonder? Let’s watch over our healthy daughter! Would it be that?

Sieg in the picture felt a little prickly and hard to approach.

However, I somewhat liked it. I thought that it would have been nice to meet her back then.

I pondered about the purpose of the picture, but they were all wrong guesses.

“The answer is.....”

W-What could it be.

Father-in-law teased me.

It’s not in celebration of her getting a decoration nor for her promotion nor for her birthday. Just what kind of purpose could it have.....?

“For marriage interviews.”

“Eh!?”

Once again, I checked the picture of the gallant officer.

—— Yup, handsome!!

If such a picture came, I think any lady would instantly say, “I want to marry him!”

Apparently, they called Sieg over to force her to have a marriage interview, but despairingly none of the dresses looked good on her. In the end, her military uniform suited her best, so they had no choice but to make the painter draw a picture in her military uniform.

“Really~ it was tough. No one wanted to marry her after looking at this picture!”

Back then, Sieg was not interested in marriage. That’s why she has a sullen expression, I thought.

“I bowed my head and got marriage interviews arranged, but Sieg was busy so she could not come.”

“.....Sounds like you had a tough time.”

“However, when the interviews were cancelled, the men looked relieved in contrast.”

If a soldier that seems stronger comes to the marriage interview, it would feel depressing.

If it was me from my younger days, I probably would have declined.

“Hmm, I see. So Ritzhard-kun you weren’t interested in Sieg.”

“But I really love her!”

However, my taste a little more than a decade ago differs greatly from now.

If it was back then, I wouldn't have proposed to her.

Sieg too wasn't interested in marriage back then.

“So the two had a fateful meeting as time passed.”

“Indeed!”

Rather than fate, it's more that our interests aligned though.

Well, it doesn't change the fact that I am happy now. So it can be called fate.

“Alright, I'll give the picture of a handsome soldier to Ritzhard-kun!”

“Eh!? Truly?! Hurray——!!”

What an amazing reward!

I unexpectedly ended up receiving a treasure.

However, I was to keep it a secret from Sieg.



The picture of Sieg is wrapped in cloth and carried in secret.

To not let anyone see it, I quickly moved through the hallways.

At every corner, I checked if there were anyone.

If Sieg finds it, she will definitely confiscate it!!

It was a treasure I wanted to protect at all costs.

A little more and I'll be in my room! The moment I thought that, someone talked to me from behind me. I felt as though my heart was going to spring out of my mouth.

“Ritzhard-san, what are you doing?”

“You are sort of sneaking around.”

“Ah, brothers-in-law.....”

I was discovered by dangerous people.

The people who approached me from behind were the single brothers-in-law whose ages were close to Sieg.

I tightly hugged the picture of Sieg to hide it.

“Could that be, a nude painting?”

“Eh!?”

“It’s recently trending in the cities.”

I-I see. I didn’t know.

Leaving my uneasiness aside, my brothers-in-law heated up from talking about naked women.

Apparently, lewd pictures of blonde beauties are popular in the cities.

“So, Ritzhard-san, what did you buy?”

“Eh!?”

“Even if you look fluffy, you are a man after all.”

“No.....”

W-What should I do.

Should I say that it's a nude painting and leave?"

However, I don't want to my brothers-in-law.

But, if I tell the truth here it will be found out by Sieg.

"The latest?"

"N-No, something from a decade ago."

"Hehh, that's quite old."

"I-I wasn't the one who bought it."

"F-From father?"

"No no no!"

To protect father-in-law's honour (?) I shook my head.

"I wonder what was popular a decade ago?"

"Worrying."

"!?"

N-No! This is for myself!Because I said that, I kept getting cornered.

"What did you buy?"

"I don't know Ritzhard-san's tastes."

"Ah, that's,"

As I slowly took some steps back, I hit the wall with a thud.

Being surrounded by brothers-in-law who are at least a head taller than me, should I say that they're imposing, or intimidating?

What should I do? What should I do?

Would it be alright to reveal it here.

The gallant figure of Sieglinde in her youth.

No. I can't.

Here, I'll just say, 'Can I enjoy this alone this time?' and make them give up.

When I decided on that plan and was about to open my mouth, a yell came from far away.

"What are you doing!"

"!?"

From the sound, my brothers-in-law flinched.

I was also a little surprised.

It was Sieglinde.

She started questioning what my brothers-in-law were doing.

"N-No, we were just talking with Ritzhard-san, that's all."

"I-Indeed, we were talking about art, r-right?"

"Ah, yes."

"It looked to me as if you were cornering Ritzhard!?"

"Th-That's not what we were doing."

"W-We were just having an enjoyable conversation."

When Sieg glared at them, my brothers-in-law ran away.

What should I say, Sieg, she's strong.

"Are you alright?"

"Eh?"

"You were getting pestered by my brothers, weren't you?"

"N-No, not really."

"You don't have to mind my brothers."

Well, it is true that she saved me.

"Why were getting cornered like that?"

.....No I'm not safe yet!! This is a disaster!!

Sieg noticed the picture I was holding dearly.

I couldn't answer even when she asked what it was.

"What are hiding?"

"But this is,"

.....This is impossible. I'm getting even more than when I was with my brothers-in-law.

Her sharp glare pierced me.

However, they were much softer than the one from Sieg in the picture.

I can endure this somehow? I thought.

However, there's no hiding anything from Sieg.

As beads of sweat formed on my brows, I handed over the picture to Sieg.

Sieg removed the cloth and looked inside.

“.....”

“.....”

The moment she saw the picture, her cheeks were dyed red.

She looked at me with a slightly wet eye, that it was less intimidating than before.

“Sieg, let's talk in my room.”

“.....”

If she's going to get angry, let's have that happen where others can't see her.

I invited her to my room out of that thought.

Sitting across from each other on our seats, she started interrogating me.

“.....Where did you find this?”

“From father-in-law's library.”

“Did you get it from father?”

“.....N-No.”

I thought that I shouldn't drag father-in-law into this, so I kept silent.

“I apologise. It would be unpleasant to you for me take this without telling you.”

“.....”

I honestly confessed that I wanted to enjoy the picture for myself since it was a dashing picture.

Sieg looked dumbfounded.

When I told her that I’m sorry, she said something surprising.

“Ritz, what about your picture?”

“Eh?”

“Don’t you have one at the Marquess’s mansion?”

“Mine?”

Hmm. I think that someone painted some when I was young.

When I answered so, another unexpected response came.

“If I can have a picture of you, I won’t mind giving this to you.”

“Eh?”

“I’m also curious about how you looked when you were young.”

If I can have this picture with something like that, then gladly!!

When I contacted grandfather later, he brought over a few pictures.

We flipped through each of them.

“Isn’t Ritzhard when he was little like the snow fairy?”

“Indeed, very cute.”

He showed pictures of when I was a baby, when I was four years old, and when I was ten years old. Three pictures in total.

I only came thrice to this country when I was little. I don't remember the first two times.

Sieg joyfully looked at the pictures. I felt embarrassed for some reason.

Meanwhile grandfather made an unnecessary.....I mean, a wonderful proposal.

"Pick one, I'll give one you like to you."

"Eh, is that alright with you?"

"It's fine, so choose one."

Sieg seriously pondered for about an hour. In the end, she settled on the picture of me as a baby.

"Grandfather-in-law, thank you very much. I'll treasure this."

"I'm glad you like this."

Like so, the picture exchange was over.

The picture of me when I was a baby is now hung up in the bedroom.

Yeah, embarrassing after all.

Chapter 106 - To Grandfather!

After Arno was born, we received many presents from grandfather.

So Sieg and I wanted to repay him somehow.

Before, we already gave him wooden animal carvings and kuksas, so we thought that we shouldn't make handicrafts.

"Then, why don't we go to the department store at the capital?"

"Alright."

She told me that there is a large commercial complex a few hours away from House von Wattin's fief by carriage.

"Would it be alright take Arno as well?"

"Well, that's a delicate issue."

Moving for long periods places a burden on children.

For that, we decided to consult a doctor and my parents-in-law.

The next day.

I consulted my parents-in-law, and they suggested that I should call a department store employee from the city. It seems that it would be possible to know what kind of goods people around grandfather's age prefer.

Since they said that they knew the person for a long time, I asked them to take care of that.

When I told Sieg about that, she smiled, saying that it's a good thing.

The doctor said that moving in carriages does not cause problems, so we can take Arno to the city. Grandfather will be happy too. However, it hasn't even been a month since his birth so we shouldn't strain him. For the present, I decided to take it to grandfather's house in person.

“That’s how it is, so Arno has to watch the house with mum~”

Arno was staying still on my lap. When I rocked him, he let out a yawn. Even though he’s my child, he’s too cute. I wanted to smooch his puffy cheeks, but he was nodding off to sleep so I didn’t do it.

He fell asleep a while later, so I placed him in the cradle.

I knelt down and slowly moved the cradle.

The faint baby scent made me feel happy.

My cheeks kept getting loose from seeing his sleeping face, but since there would be no end to it I returned to my original spot.

I sat down next to Sieg.

My wife had her arms crossed and had a frown on her face. Just what might she be pondering?

“What is it?”

“Ritzhard.”

“Ye~s?”

“Are you alright with the payment?”

Money for the goods.

Payment for grandfather’s present.

If I’m giving a gift to a marquess, I have to give a top-quality item.

He is a gentleman living in high society, so he has to be careful about what he wears. “What’s impOrtant is the feeling ☆” doesn’t work for people living in that world.

“To be honest, I haven’t used the allowances I received from grandfather.”

Twenty nine years since birth. The money I received from grandfather every year was not used and stored in the bank of this country.

Grandfather told me to “be a proper gentleman” using the money, but for some reason I ended up not having a use for the money.

Of course it was forbidden for me to use it for the village.

It really was money with no good way to spend it.

“Isn’t that money for Ritzhard to buy clothes?”

“Ah, well, that’s right.”

I did use the money to buy dress suits and other goods for the balls every year.

However, more enough money was deposited every year.

The usage was limited, so I didn’t think of that as my money.

“I think giving a splendid present is something a gentleman should do.”

Anyhow, I can only use the money here. Even if I use it for grandfather, I probably won’t be scolded.

“Then, let me pay half.”

“N-No.”

“I have money I saved up from my days in the military as well as lifetime gifts from father.”

I found out about Sieg’s assets for the first time.

It seems that she had been receiving money from father-in-law, and the amount was easily much greater than the total amount I received from grandfather.

“Sieg, amazing.”

“I never had the opportunity to use it before.”

She never withdrew money.

Apparently, she thought of using for the village, but she thought that it would have been nosy to give aid when it wasn't requested.

"It sounds like you were rather bothered by it."

"No, well, it is a difficult problem."

"I-Indeed~"

Sieg really is kind, not harm my trifling pride by just suggesting means to raise money.

If I did ask for money from her, I probably would have been extremely embarrassed.

However, Captain Artonen saved the village from a financial crisis.

Now, we can function smoothly with just the budget from the country.

This was also thanks to her advice, so I have to be very thankful.

"Sieg, thank you."

"I didn't do anything."

Being modest again!

More importantly, there was something bothering me so I asked.

"Why did father-in-law do something like giving you lifetime gifts?"

"He thought that I wouldn't be able to marry, so he specially gave me those."

"Ah, that's why~"

Apparently Sieg's family couldn't even imagine that Sieg would marry.

Really~ I am a lucky person.

To marry such an amazing woman.

“What are you thinking of?”

“Sieg!”

Because I was grinning, Sieg eyed me suspiciously.

It seems like my road becoming a gentleman is far away.



A few days later, a department store employee came to the house with many goods.

When I went to the living room, there were various items laid on the table.

The clerk told us to take a look without hurrying.

Unlike the door-to-door merchants in the village, the clerk was not noisy, merely standing against the wall until called.

Pocket watches, canes, accessories, gloves, coats, hats, shoes, there were many expensive goods for nobles.

“N~n, what would be good.”

“This is rather tough.”

I don’t know anything regarding whether the products were good or not.

My parents-in-law went out, so I did not have anyone I could ask for advice.

Sieg was also frowning, saying, “I have no idea.”

“Ah!”

“Nn?”

Sieg held up something.

“What’s that?”

“Shades.”

Shades apparently protect the eyes from sunlight.

Come to think of it, grandfather squinted often when he went out. Maybe the sunlight was too bright.

I asked the employee to explain further for more details.

The good consists of two coloured lenses fastened in a metal frame, after which earpieces are affixed so that one can wear them on the ear.

They were originally used in the military, but recently ones for civilian use were made.

Since they’re not very common yet, it would be a good gift for grandfather who is very curious about new things.

I discussed with Sieg and decided to buy shades along with a case for it.

Some time later, a nicely wrapped product was delivered. Along with that, we decided to send a painting we commissioned recently.

It was a picture of Sieg, Arno and me, the three of us.

Sieg is sitting on a chair holding Arno in her arms, while I’m standing behind them with a hand on the chair. Sieg proposed that grandfather would be happy if he received it so we commissioned a painting.

“Then, Sieg, Arno, see you later.”

“Have a safe trip.”

“Roger that!”

This time, Sieg and Arno will be house-sitting.

I will be spending a day at grandfather’s place then I’ll be returning the next day.

After a few hours on the carriage, I arrived at the capital.

Maybe because he knew I was coming, grandfather was waiting for me at the entrance.

“Hmph, what, it’s just you.”

“I’m sor~ry.”

I did write that Sieg and Arno can’t come in the letter, but he might have been having a faint hope. I felt sorry that it was just his grandson who was turning thirty soon.

Since he told me to wait in the drawing room, I headed there without anyone guiding me because I knew the house.

For the bag containing the picture, a servant carried it.

While I was waiting on a chair, my uncle came. He’s my father’s older brother.

He’s a praiseworthy man whom I can’t make a correlation between him and my father.

“It seems that you received a prompt welcome from father.”

“Haha, well.”

He complained that I was alone, but that might be his way of welcoming me.

“For the last few days, father could not calm down when he heard that you were coming.”

“H-He was looking forward to seeing my wife and son, no?”

“No, he said that it was only you who was to come.”

“!”

G-Grandfather, he’s not honest.....

I wonder if he was looking forward to it so much that he came out to the front door to greet me.

If he was welcoming me, he could have given me a hug or something.

While we were chatting, grandfather came.

Uncle exited.

I smiled and gestured for him to sit next to me, but father sat down on the chair across from me.

After that, he was eyeing the packages on the table.

“What’s that?”

“A present for you, grandfather.”

“Do you want allowances or something?”

“.....It’s different.”

First I gave him the package containing the shades.

Having received it, he opened it as if he was looking at something strange.

“Hm. Shades, I see.”

“They’re to protect your eyes from sunlight.”

“I see.”

Grandfather looked at the glasses interestedly.

How is it? When he asked that, I replied that it suited him very well.

The response is great. It was indeed something that Sieg picked.

Then, after that, I gave him the painting.

Disregarding me, Sieg and Arno were very lovely.

“This is.....!”

Grandfather stared intensely at the painting.

Since the picture's drawn very well, he must have liked it.

Then, while dining, I talked about Arno and Sieg.

Grandfather listened with a benign expression.

"To be honest, I wanted to bring Sieg and Arno as well."

"Well, riding carriages would be tough for a baby and a mother that just had a delivery."

Well, I can say the same for grandfather.

He looks healthy, but he's in his late seventies, so long carriage rides would burden his body.

"If it's just me, I can come again."

"Well, it can't be helped that it's just you!"

"There you go again~ Saying something like that~"

"W-What do you mean again!"

I couldn't say "You love me too, don't you?" He probably can't get honest in front of the person in question.

For now, I felt relieved since he gladly received the presents.

Later, when uncle wrote me a letter, apparently he wore the shades every time he went out, and the picture was hung up in his private room, where it can be seen clearly.

It seems like he quite liked them.

I thought that it would be nice to get a picture with him next time.

Chapter 107 - Adalbert von Lüneberg's Activity Report

Time and time again, I was told that I have a 'scary face' from people close to me.

However, I thought that it wasn't something to fuss over, and did not think of it for a long time.

But then I realised what those words meant my first child was born.

At first, I scoffed at the thought of children.

I really did think that because I did not have any experience with children.

However, when I saw my newborn, well, it was lovely.

I felt that my child was the loveliest thing in the world.

My wife held my son out to me, so I took him in my arms.

I was told that it was a child that did not cry easily.

However, the moment I embraced him, he was crying as though a fire was lit on him.

When I returned him to my wife in panic, he stopped crying.

He might have been in a bad mood. I had thought that back then.

However, even after that, my son cried greatly when I held him.

When that happened around ten times, I started getting cautious.

I realised that I had a face that was not loved by children.

As I spent busy days, my child grew quickly.

They were so small, but before I realised it, he started walking, talking and eating on their own.

I had been busy so I did not have many opportunities to spend time with my child.

When I saw them after a long time, he cried the moment our eyes met.

Meanwhile, my wife conceived our second child.

This time, I have to put in effort to not be hated.

I pondered greatly to how I should go about it.

They're so cute, but it's painful to be disliked.

To get a good idea, I went out of my office during lunchtime and spent time thinking in the park.

Children were running about happily.

I was watching the sight contentedly, yet when a child's eyes met with mine he screamed and ran away.

So it's the face after all.

I couldn't really accept it for some reason.

The next day, I headed for the park again.

It was to understand and observe children.

Children were happily playing about yet again. There were quite a lot of adults too, unexpectedly. I wonder if everyone's enjoying their leisure time.

When I sat down on a bench, a young woman around the age of my wife approached, asking if I wanted to buy some flowers.

The flowers she had were merely wildflowers organised into bundles.

I couldn't believe that she would sell this. She did not even have the money to procure flowers.

The woman's clothes were in poor condition as well.

They're struggling to get by. It's a sad story.

The bouquet cost ten pfennig. I didn't have such small currency. I passed some coins I had in my pocket for the flowers.

When I took a closer look around, most of the adults in the part were women. They all had baskets, selling something.

I heard that the employment rate for women were low.

Even when they need money, they don't have places to work at.

It really is a sad state of affairs.

Well, more importantly, the children.

They were playing tag happily. It seems that children like playing tag.

Indeed, I thought, and chased my four-year-old son, but I ended up making him cry for his dear life.

It seems like not all children like tag.

I continued to observe children at the park.

One day, I saw something great.

An entertainer with a strange appearance had captivated the children.

He was well-liked as 'the moustache guy'.

Indeed, the way how his moustache was upturned was interesting.

Right, it's the moustache, I realised.

A neatly trimmed my moustache and waited for my second child to be born.

Our second child was a girl.

Children really are cute.

I had a funny moustache, so I thought that it would be alright.

However, the result was a miss.

Just by me looking at her, she cried. What is this.

My daughter grew into a beautiful girl, but she did not like me at all.

When I peeked into the children's room, my son and daughter were huddled up together in fear. It was a somewhat cruel thing.

I had thought that they might get used to it if I saw them every day, but unfortunately I had only one body to keep up with my busy schedule.

Two years later, another son was born.

My wife said that he was too quiet.

Even as I did not believe that, I held him in my arms.

As my wife said, our third child was too quiet.

He did not cry, but when I embraced him he cried while remaining expressionless.

Our third child was an oddball.

Hated by three children, I might have given up, but I didn't do that yet.

I thought that I would have more leisure if my business was failing, so I started something new in a desperate mood.

I had thought that I would be able to spend more time with my family that way.

The new business was running factories with women employees.

I thought up the idea after seeing the women in the park.

People around me tried to stop me, saying that it was a foolish idea.

However, if there's less work, I can spend more time with my family, so it's a good deal.

Or so I thought, but my desperate business was very successful.

Of course, I became even busier, that I could see my family only once a month.

My first son grew into an adult before I realised it, with all traces of cuteness gone.

My first daughter was married off. She had grown into a beauty like my wife, but looking back I could count the number of times we talked with my two hands.

I'm sure about my second son.

The oddball was doing some research in university.

In addition, he's not just any oddball.

I told him as well, but he was lacking emotions as a human.

I thought that his emotion did not change no matter what I did, but that wasn't exactly so. If there was something he liked, he got so absorbed that he would forget to have meals.

Go study about people's feelings, when I told him that, he started researching psychology or something.

I wanted to scold him that study does not necessarily mean research, but I patiently endured.

Then for some weird reason, he said that he will go on a trip and disappeared.

A few years passed after my second son disappeared.

My first son had married and had family.

The next year, my grandchild was born.

Of course, the baby did not like me.

I had already given up on the matter.

A few years after that, a letter detailing surprising events came from my second son whom I had forgotten about.

He told me that he married in a faraway land, and even had a child.

I quickly sent celebratory gifts, but nothing came back.

After that, I sent gifts every year, and saved up money for my grandson. I did not get careless about the preparing for the child I had not seen yet.

My grandson's name is Ritzhard.

According to my son, he was cute like the snow fairy.

I told him to come with his wife and child many times, but apparently the father of the wife was reluctant to come to this country.

My wish was granted four years after that.

My son came back with his wife and child.

First and foremost, I was surprised at how my son had changed.

He felt softer, and could smile.

I could understand why from seeing his wife.

My son must have been greatly influenced by her.

My grandson was just as my son had described.

White hair like snow and blue eyes like sapphire.

I couldn't see him as anything other than the snow fairy from fairytale.

Believe it or not, the child smile after seeing me.

“——Ha?”

A child smiling at me!?

I was dumbfounded for a moment.

When my son introduced me as his grandfather, my grandson trotted up to me and bowed.

“Grandfather, nice to meet you, I’m Ritzhard.”

“!”

After introducing himself, Ritzhard spread his arms open while fidgeting.

Whatever could that mean!?

My son said, “Father, won’t you hug him?”

I realised it after he told me. My grandson wanted me to hug him.

I cautiously approached.

When I glanced at him, his eyes were shining.

I embraced him quickly.

I was worried that he might suddenly start crying, but Ritzhard laughed joyfully.

What should I say, what an innocent child!

I thought that he was the cutest in the world.

I had thought that my efforts came to fruition, that I was now loved by children. However, my first son and my first daughter’s children still cried upon seeing me.

How regretful.



“I was scared of father when I was little.”

I heard my son's confession a decade later.

“At the time when you chased me, you appeared in my dreams for many day.....”

He asked what I was doing that day.

I couldn't tell him that I was trying to play tag.

The grandson feared me married as well, and had a child.

I did not expect anything, because if I showed up the child would cry and hate me.

Well, I could dote on Ritzhard, so I thought that was fine.

I did not have any regrets.

However, an unexpected change came for me.

The man who could not marry, Ritzhard had married, and the children at his wife's place miraculously came to like me.

More miracles happened, as Ritzhard's child was born.

I was happy just having a great-grandchild, but Ritzhard wanted me to name the child.

I felt moved that such a thing would happen.

I agonised for days and days, and decided on a name for my great-grandchild.

My grandson and his wife were happy too, so I felt great.

In addition, the great-grandson was the cutest in the world.

Another miracle occurred, as the child did not cry even when he saw my face.

What bliss.

That day, I thought that living long was not so bad after all.

I felt thankful to Ritzhard for making my dream come true.

I did not tell him in person, but I should show him my appreciation some time.